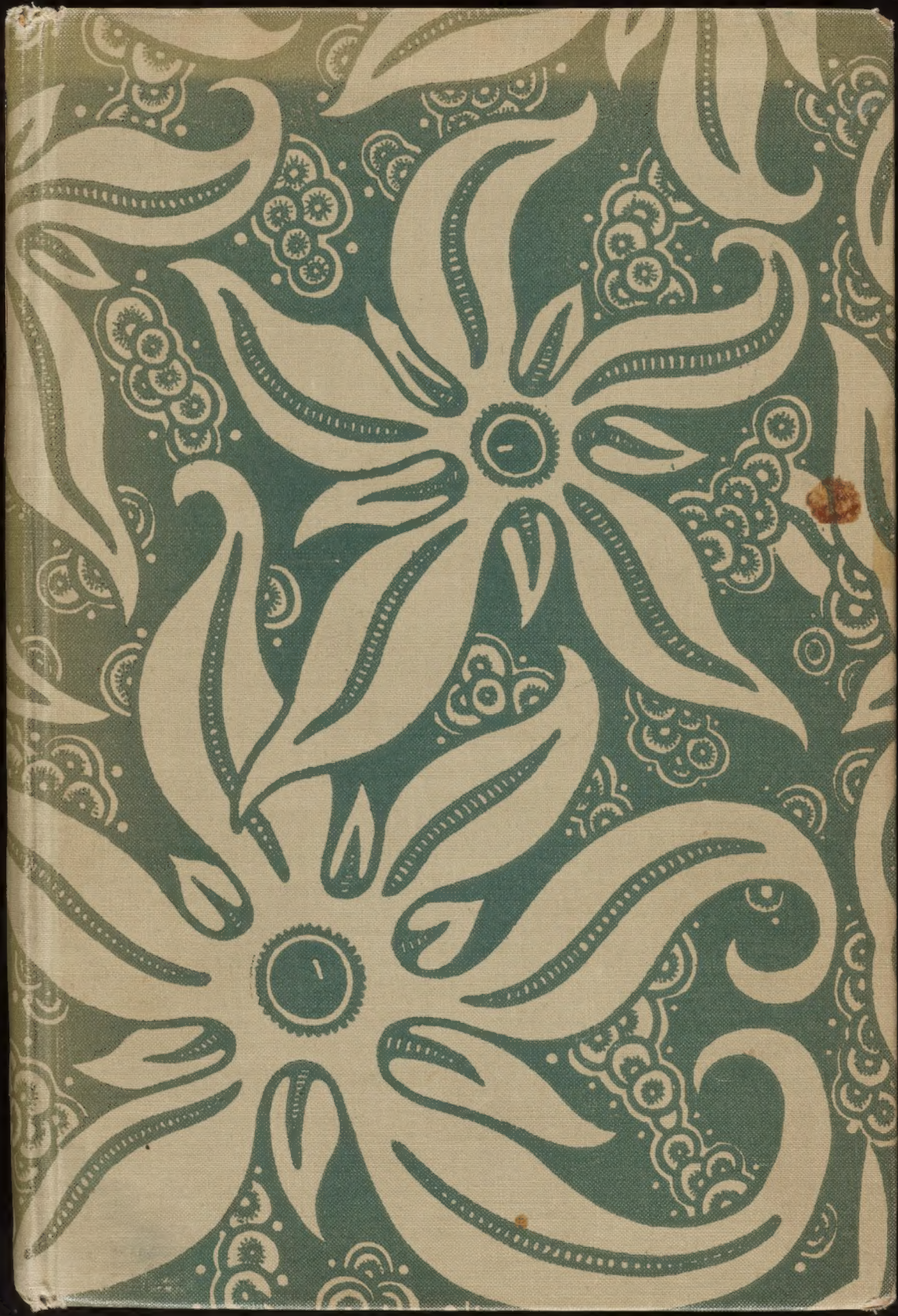

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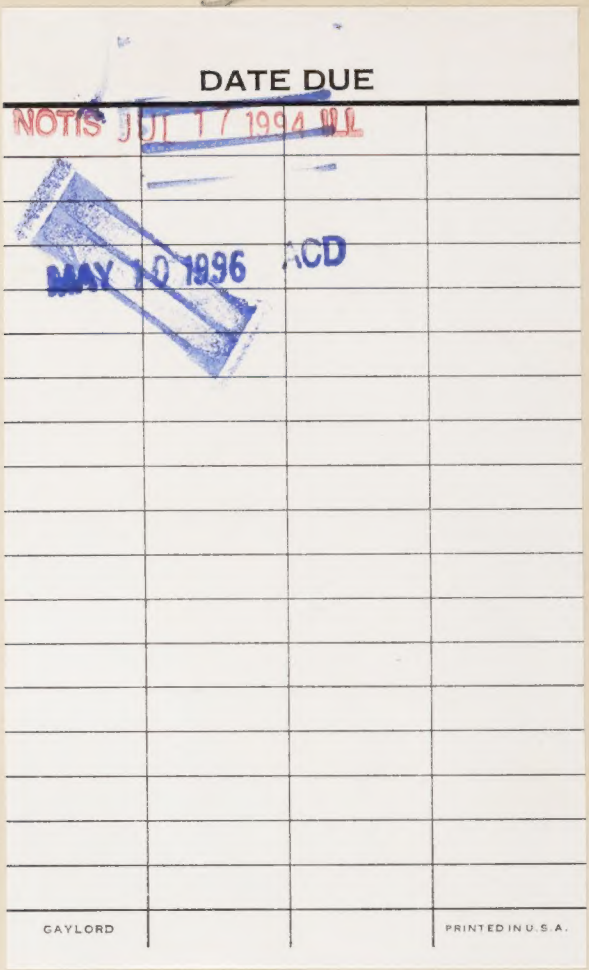
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SATAN CAME TO EDEN

SATAN CAME TO EDEN

As told by

DORE STRAUCH

to

WALTER BROCKMANN

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Harper & Brothers Publishers
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1936

SATAN CAME TO EDEN

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FIRST EDITION

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My Dedication

This book, which is the story of our life together, is published to the memory of my companion, Dr. Frederick Ritter, whose grave is on Floreana but who is with me still.

—Dore Strauch

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FOREWORD

While on a cruise to the South Seas on my yacht *Mizpah* in the winter of 1930, I put in for a day or so at Post Office Bay on the rocky coast of Floreana, or Charles, Island in the Galapagos group. This island, just a few miles south of the equator, was supposed to be uninhabited. The bay was empty. A barrel, which has served this part of the Pacific as an unofficial post-office since early whaling-days, stood on the shore. I had heard of this famous barrel, so went ashore with my guests to investigate. In the barrel we found a note in German directed to the master of any vessel that might anchor. Two people were on the island, we learned from the note. They were short of food and had been forced to move inland for water. One of them was injured. They requested the master to sound his whistle or fire a gun and they would come to the shore. We blew our whistles and sirens, fired our one-pounder, and played our searchlight over the island during that first night, but no one appeared.

The following morning I organized four searching-parties made up of my guests and ship's officers and started them out in different directions to search the island. One of my searching-parties headed by Baker Brownell of the Northwestern University faculty, who incidentally was the only man among my guests who knew German, found Dr. Frederick Ritter and Dore Strauch. They were well inland, about an hour's march on a faint trail through the desert brush and over broken lava rock, but had heard our gun and were headed towards the shore. They were dressed in ragged clothes and their shoes were cut to pieces by the rocks. They greeted joyfully the little group headed by Mr. Brownell.

Mr. Brownell brought them out aboard the yacht. We had a long talk with them and got part of their story. They had come to the island about five months before, well supplied with food, but they had been forced to move inland to the mountains because of the shortage of water. They had left most of their stores in a cache near the beach. These stores had been stolen by men from some vessel, perhaps a fishing-boat. Without medicines or antiseptics, with no guns, very few tools and almost no food, Dr. Ritter and Dore were in a bad way. She had fallen on the sharp lava rocks and had

cut her knee to the bone. This almost disabled her. He had injured his arm and side in a fall through the branches of a tree. The red-bearded doctor, about forty years old, and the young and beautiful girl could probably not have kept going much longer. We gave them enough supplies for a year or more—food, medicines, tools, a rifle, pickaxes, shovels, even dynamite, for among our other adventures we had been digging for treasure on Cocos Island; and then we sailed away.

As we left the island I sent a radiogram from my yacht to Jim Foster of the Associated Press, telling him of our experience. This was the first news that came to civilization from the Galapagos Islands about the Ritters. By giving this first news I unintentionally started the avalanche of publicity that has fallen on the Ritters through the past five years. After weeks of cruising with my six guests, U. J. Herrmann, Charles Hanna, John Lock, Baker Brownell, George Fox, and L. G. Fitzgerald, and the crew of the *Mizpah* among lonely islands of the Caribbean and the tropical Pacific, this seemed a bit of harmless news. Of the public attention that followed and its eventual effect on the Ritters there was no foretelling.

A warm friendship sprang up between us and the Ritters. I sent them letters and supplies whenever I learned that a boat was calling there, and they in turn wrote me whenever a ship came by. Some of their letters to Mr. Brownell and me were edited and published by the *Atlantic Monthly* in the form of three articles signed by Dr. Ritter. The reports of yachtsmen and others who later visited the Ritters were worked up into innumerable feature stories in the Sunday supplements and the magazines.

Then came Dr. Ritter's tragic and still mysterious death and Dore Strauch's return to Germany. I urged her to set down the account of her experiences on the island and her brave life with the man for whom she left home and friends. She has a marvelous story to tell. It is far stranger and more fascinating than many an imagined tale of adventure.

E. F. McDonald, Jr.

SATAN CAME TO EDEN

Pacific
Ocean
PINTA I.
MARCHENA I.
GALAPAGOS ISLANDS
EQUATOR
SANTIAGO I.
FERNANDINA I.
DUNCAN I.
CHAVES I.
SANTA FE I.
SAN CRISTOBAL I.
ISABELA I.
POST OFFICE BAY
FLOREANA
(SANTA MARIA)
WOOD I.
NORTH
CENTRAL AMERICA
PANAMA CANAL
GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS
FLOREANA
South
ECUADOR
America
Pacific Ocean

Chapter I: THE END OF ONE LIFE

I WAS A VERY HAPPY CHILD, AND IN EVERYTHING I HAVE SINCE experienced, I have never ceased to thank my good parents for letting us be children so long. Although my father was a schoolmaster, he never pressed his children into a set system of upbringing, as so many educators do, and my mother has always shown me that instinctive understanding which certain people are gifted with, and which enables them to grasp with their hearts things that are often obscure to their minds.

All my life I have liked to think back upon my earliest years, and if my most vivid remembrances of that time are concerned with animals rather than with people, the reason is perhaps that I have always felt a special intimacy with so-called dumb creation which is, I think, unusual in one born and brought up in cities. I remember as a four-year-old spending a holiday with my grandmother on a farm, being told that the big watch-dog had to be chained up by day because he was very savage. But on the same afternoon I called upon him in his kennel and told him I had come to keep him company. We told each other many things, and spent a delightful afternoon, at the end of which I was discovered side by side with my new friend fast asleep inside the kennel. Thirty years later my little donkey friend on Floreana once reminded me of that old watch-dog, Pussel, and other animal companions of my childhood with whom I had been able to talk as I never could with human beings, and who, no matter how they often seemed to dislike other members of the human race, were always ready to be friends with me.

It must not be thought that I was one of those strange and solitary children who seem unable to adapt themselves to their environment; on the contrary, I was always glad to play with anyone my own age, and cannot remember that I was ever very different from my playmates except in one respect, and that only as I began to grow a little older.

A feeling then began gradually to take root in me that I was somehow not like other children, and I found myself going my own way, as though I had no real part in their lives, but had to lead a life of my own. When this feeling became really strong I was no

longer quite a child, but of an age when ideas acquire the importance of actions, and take up the most part of one's thoughts. A kind of conviction grew in me that there was some task which I was born to fulfill, although I had no notion what it could be, and no real understanding of what a life-work meant. I only knew that it was something great, and in a way I cannot describe I was always looking for it.

The years went by, and life was no longer a time of calm or ardent meditation. I had begun my training as a teacher. The Revolution of 1918 broke out. It had no more passionate partisan than I, then in that stage of my own personal development when all the ills of the world seemed to be solved only by violent and radical outward measures. The proletarian movement revealed to me so many things of which I had not dreamed before, that I was plunged into an extreme of zeal for contributing in whichever way I could to the amelioration of the frightful distress among the German working-classes. This socialistic phase is one that almost every person goes through, and I, like many others, enrolled myself in the voluntary service of the poor and poorest with the religious enthusiasm of my age. My experiences at that time certainly influenced me deeply, as an aspect of life was unfolded before my youthful eyes which left me gazing at it in helpless despair.

These things all turned my thoughts to the subject of the higher development of mankind, and realizing, in the face of what I had seen, that this can never come from the outside, I sought the way towards it from within. It was Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* that became my teacher and my guide. I set out to remake my life according to its precepts, and then began that struggle against evil instincts and passions, which I determined to wage victoriously, whatever the cost.

I finished my teachers' training course, and passed the examination, but found no immediate appointment. Having to earn my living at something, however, I accepted the offer of a post in one of the large banks.

Although I completely realized that social work was not my vocation, my desire to help my fellows rather increased than diminished. I thought that in order to achieve this ideal I might

become a doctor, and, undeterred by the prospect of seventeen hours' work a day, I enrolled myself at a night-school to study for the university entrance examination. I might have stood the strain of all this better, had I not chosen that time for confining my diet exclusively to figs. It was my reading of Schopenhauer which inspired me with this idea to live on fruits, discountenancing the destruction of life for human nourishment. The year and a half of this regimen, so unsuitable considering the great strain my double work put upon me, sufficed to weaken me to such an extent that one or the other of them had to be abandoned. By this time I had arrived at the age of twenty-one.

Among our family friends was the principal of a high school, a man of forty-five, a very grave, sedate person, who had long since reached all his conclusions. Nature had blessed me with a very happy temperament, and I began to see that the cheerfulness and gaiety which my somewhat melancholy father had always treasured in me, also seemed able to charm the earnestness of this other solemn man, so much too earnest for his age, and lure him out of himself. His personality attracted me, and I thought it would be a work worth doing to thaw him out with sunshine. I never doubted but that it would be easy to overcome the deeply-rooted peculiarities which had grown upon him during his long and cheerless bachelor life, and lure him to a cheerfulness which he had apparently never known. I thought it would be splendid to make him young again, and happy.

One October day he asked me to marry him; I accepted and was very happy. It was not my parents' way actually to oppose their children's decisions, and so they brought no pressure to bear in order to dissuade me from entering into a marriage the prospect of which so obviously delighted me. But they did not hide from me their own misgivings; for not only did the disparity between my age and my future husband's seem ominous to them, but their experienced eyes foresaw that either my light-heartedness would be extinguished in his gloom, or else that the day would come when I should revolt against it. In either case they felt that this marriage could come to no good end.

The wedding was in April, and I at twenty-three became the

wife of an elderly schoolmaster. My husband was, I found, extremely thrifty. For half a year we still occupied no apartment of our own, but lived in furnished rooms, I, at his wish, continuing my work at the bank. These were the years of the German currency inflation, and I received a good salary. Nevertheless it seemed strange to me that I should still be required to go to work, when I had a husband well able to support me. It was not I who rebelled, however, but my health. I broke down completely. The next seventeen months I spent in a hospital where the doctors diagnosed my illness as multiple sclerosis. The lameness which afterwards became permanent, attacked me at that time. I had greatly desired a child, but now had to undergo an operation which made this forever impossible. I do not know whether this really had to be or not, but I do know that when I learned that I could never become a mother, something inside me broke and gave up hope. I became well again, and could leave the hospital, but the doctors told me that my illness was incurable. This was a blow, but it shocked me less than the realization that my marriage was a failure, and beyond repair. Like countless other women who enter marriage in what is called a state of innocence, the conjugal relation had offended and repelled me. But I had hoped to save what there was to save of a marriage blighted at the outset, and overcame much inner bitterness and rebellion in the attempt. It was all in vain.

For it was not, as I had thought, I who was to make a different man of my husband, but he who had determined to make a different woman of me, conformable with his ideal—the petty, bourgeois ideal of the German man on which the German woman has been content to model herself down the ages—the "Hausfrau," her horizon bounded by the four walls of a few stuffy rooms, her mind stunted to the scope of her husband's paltry opinions. With all the strength and obstinacy in me, I defended myself against being turned into something I had always passionately despised.

At the same time, it grieved me to think that I was as disappointing to my husband as he to me, and I did all I could to make this up to him by opposing him outwardly as seldom as possible, and in not letting him see how little of my life he really shared.

But the emptiness and frustration of such an existence poisons

the spirit, however one may strive to counterbalance it. Having been so mistaken in my attempt to devote myself to one man's life only, I began to return to my former idea that I was meant to work for the general good, and decided to go on with my preparations for studying medicine.

My husband did not oppose me; in fact, for all his lack of skill with me, he never ceased to be, in his own way, a generous and devoted friend. Perhaps this praiseworthiness in him became more clear to me in later years than it was then, but even at that time I felt grateful that he did not hinder my studies. I found a refuge in the fact that my illness necessitated much time in hospitals, during which time my husband did not seem to mind his loneliness. I could thus use the time to study without having to rebuke myself for playing truant.

One day, while I was receiving a ray treatment, a young-looking doctor came through the room. He struck me particularly because of the deep furrows in his forehead and the extremely harsh expression of his eyes. It would be too much to say that he looked brutal, but there was a strange absence in his face of any trace of amiability. It went through my mind that I hoped I might never have to be examined or treated by him. This was in the Hydrotherapeutic Institute, a department of the University of Berlin clinic, where I was again a patient. This same doctor appeared frequently in the ward, among the group of assistants who accompanied the head physician on his visits, so that I had leisure to observe him closely. He was not tall, but very slender, and moved with extraordinary litheness. He had a great deal of fair, curly fair, and his eyes were very blue.

One day, during the afternoon visit, the new doctor, passing from bed to bed, asked whether any of the patients had any special wishes. He came and sat beside me, and we talked. Our talk was about the power of thought. He told me that even I need not submit to illness if I would learn to think in a way that would make me well. He spoke of certain books, and offered to lend me some. It was thus that I came to read the works of Mulfort, which have influenced me so much. I found in them to my delight a conception of life and of the world which was my very own. From this

time on, Dr. Ritter came every day, and talked to me as long as he had time to spare. We felt our way carefully into each other's world, and something in each of us knew that it had found its affinity in the other.

I had been ten days in the hospital when I was discharged as greatly improved. It was necessary, however, for me to continue in the care of a physician, and Dr. Ritter asked me if I would like to come to him in his private consultation hours. I did not then know that he had already detected the mental stress behind my physical sickness, but I felt a longing to talk to him, to unburden myself of all the problems and difficulties which beset me and destroyed my peace of mind. The burdens and conflicts of my life were becoming more than I could bear in loneliness and silence any longer. I said to Dr. Ritter that I should be glad to come and see him, and went, with the firm intention of telling him everything without reserve, as to a confessor. I found it a strange but delivering experience. He asked me if I were not happy in my marriage. I assured him that I was. One day he took me home, and as I said good-by to him at the gate, my husband appeared at the window, and came down to open the door to me. Dr. Ritter, who had gone a few steps down the street, turned and came back. "It would be cowardly not to show myself," he said. I introduced him, and we went into the house.

"Is this man really so much interested in your illness," asked my husband afterwards, "or is he in love with you?" I did not know how to answer this, so I said nothing. After this I walked with Dr. Ritter every morning through the Tiergarten to his clinic.

We had a feeling that we were intended for each other, and that there was some work we had to do together, as though we were a joint tool in the hand of a spirit using us to unknown ends. One day he kissed me, and then he said to me, "I wonder that I could do this, for I love some one else." I said, "That makes no difference," for to me the chief thing was that he accepted the love that I now knew I felt for him. He told me that he loved a girl twenty years his junior, his own niece. This was a romantic, idealistic love, scarcely returned and certainly not comprehended by the girl herself. But I could feel no jealousy of her or any other woman, for

neither man nor circumstance can come between two who have been predestined for each other.

Dr. Ritter was scarcely more than a youth when he first began to feel that the life of contemplation, through which alone the human spirit can perfect itself, could not be led in the populous places of the earth. He was not by nature a man who shunned others, that is to say, there was in him nothing of the misanthrope. But the complexity and ultimate untruthfulness of ordinary human relations seemed to him to take up too much of life and to disturb the crystallizing of that philosophy which each great thinker evolves for himself. As a physician, greatly interested in and very gifted for his work, he was forced into a continuous contact with people that could not but become increasingly irksome to a mind fast reaching its philosophical maturity. At the time our friendship began, he had arrived at the point where he was ready to make a great decision, and that I came into his life just at that moment neither of us ever thought was merely an accident.

I will not go into the details of Dr. Ritter's philosophy. He has in introductions to his own writings done this much better than I ever could. But it is necessary perhaps, in order to give a clear picture of him at that time, to say that it moved between two poles, with Nietzsche at the one end, and at the other Laotse. Nietzsche, the great prophet of the will to might, with his dynamic force and glorification of the Superman, his heroic vision of the universe and his ideal of power, could not fail to inspire a man like Dr. Ritter, himself endowed with so many of these highest qualities. It was this element of the heroic in Dr. Ritter which made the most profound impression on my mind; for as long as I can remember, I had felt drawn to everyone who seemed by nature somewhere in the neighborhood of greatness, whether he had it in himself or only in the degree with which he reverenced it in others. Surely no mind of lesser stature than Dr. Ritter's could ever have reconciled the active ideal of a Nietzsche with the gospel of inactivity and passive contemplation embodied in the precepts of the Oriental master.

From the beginning of our friendship, Dr. Ritter had admitted me into his inner world. He never made me feel that in comparison

with him my understanding of all these high problems was elementary and primitive; on the contrary he took the greatest pains to develop me and show me the way along paths which he had blazed for himself. He was never tired of telling me with what joy he had recognized in me from the very first a fellow pilgrim on the way to final wisdom. Our happiest hours together were spent in unforgettable and endless talks during which I sat at the feet of this man who looked on me as his disciple.

Dr. Ritter had an extensive and successful practice in a quiet West End street, Kalkreuthstrasse. All kinds and conditions of men and women were his patients, and he was much beloved by them. During the strenuous consulting hours he would sometimes steal a little time for me, and then we would go up on the roof of the house and talk. Gradually the plan to go away took definite shape in his mind and there, overlooking the close-packed roofs of houses where human beings herded together with insufficient air and space to move and think in, he mapped out his idea of a permanent migration to some remote spot on the earth's surface, where he could realize his great ideal of solitude. We lay up there in the sun letting our fancy wander where it would, pretending that the clouds that drifted by were our remote island of refuge and the blue sky the ocean in which our earthly Eden was set.

Dr. Ritter had a little black book in which he had noted the earth's remotest archipelagos and single islands. We would pore over these and he would tell about them until we felt that we were there. But into the midst of our dreaming would come a whistle from the landlady, a signal we had improvised to announce the arrival of patients. I had now begun to share Dr. Ritter's life in every way and it was my hope that I should go on doing so forever.

He was actually, though not legally, separated from his wife, while I was by no means separated from my husband and had a difficult situation to handle at home. Dr. Ritter, realizing that my domestic situation became harder, not easier, as time went on, suggested that I become his assistant so as to give respectability to our daily association. I, however, rejected this idea completely. It was not in me to cope with the deadly routine of a doctor's office,

and besides this, I could see that such an arrangement would end by strangling us in bonds like those of ordinary marriage from which it is so hard ever decently to escape. If I was to do my share in making this man happy, and if I had any happiness to expect from him, then it could only be in conditions entirely different from those that I had experienced in marriage—quite free, untrammeled, and from first to last unconnected with any preconceived ideas of bourgeois home-making.

Up to this time I had suffered great pangs of conscience even at the thought that I might leave my husband. On the other hand, it had never occurred to me to keep him in the dark as to my feeling for Dr. Ritter. In fact, as soon as I found out I loved this other man, I told my husband so. He furiously forbade my seeing Dr. Ritter any more, but when I refused to comply with his wish he quietly accepted my decision, and the daily walks through the Tiergarten were continued. There were no scenes between my husband and myself. I should have respected him more if there had been. While I despise women who regard their function as their husbands' cook and child-bearer as the whole of life, I still believe that a proper man must be the master in his own home. Women's lack of emotional control keeps them nearer the earth than men, and we can overcome our earthiness only if we have a man beside us, helping us and controlling our lapses. My experience on the Galapagos Islands with Baroness Wagner-Bousquet confirmed me in this theory. She was the arch-type of a woman dominated wholly by feeling and the most primitive urges; and of the young males with whom she was surrounded, not one was man enough to make his curbing influence felt. How different was the life which Dr. Ritter and I led on Floreana! Ours was an attempt entirely to stifle the animal in us wherever it interfered, as it so often must, with mutual happiness on a higher plane; and, wherever the emotional threatened to disturb our mental harmony, to rescue this at the cost of the other no matter how hard that might be. For myself I must confess that the victories I achieved in my own struggle to intellectualize the emotional side of our relationship were dearly won.

It was a painful shock to me to have to admit that my legal

husband's striking tolerance sprang from the fear that any action on his part would bring about a public scandal, and not from any higher or more generous sentiment. While I could not accuse him of not loving me, it hurt me to think that such a purely practical consideration could outweigh the normal resentment which must have filled him. But this is the way of conventional married life with its mean compromises and essential untruths.

The fascination of Dr. Ritter's personality had caught and held me from the first. But love, in the ordinary meaning of the word, does not convey the many-sidedness of my feeling for this man with his astonishing blond mane, his youthful bearing, and his steel-blue eyes that looked out from under his furrowed forehead so compellingly. He was so vital that I never felt any disparity in our ages—he was fifteen years older than I—a thing which, in my husband, I had always been depressingly conscious of. I felt that time could have no power over such dynamic strength as that, and "age" in terms of years had no significance in the case of this truth-seeker, progressing smoothly and surely by intellect along the way which I had gropingly sought, and already so far ahead of me.

I think it is quite a mistake to say that "love is blind." I know that mine was not. I know that for the sake of his great mind and spirit I tolerated more in Dr. Ritter, I made more compromises in order not to hinder our great mutual quest, than most women would in relation to any man, and I certainly in relation to any other. For in his human contacts he was rough and unskillful, and the fact that one was a woman—perhaps the only woman he did not despise —entitled one to no special clemency or favor at his hands.

In my husband's eyes I was the victim of hypnotic suggestion. He even attributed the sudden, rapid improvement in my health to the same influence. And indeed under the spell of Dr. Ritter's powerful assurance that I could be well if I would will myself to be, my health had become incomparably better than it had been for years. It was Dr. Ritter's teaching that one of the dangers of chronic malady is that it brings about, if we allow it to, a degeneration of all healthy instincts both physical and moral, and that this is the peril every patient is morally bound to fight against. "If ever we are called to account by God," he used to say, "He will not ask

what earthly deeds we achieved, but what we made of our own selves."

One day I hesitantly confessed to Dr. Ritter that I could never have any children, but he consoled me, saying, "Children are an extension of the personal into the world matter, a postponement of personal redemption and of the fulfillment of the ultimate duty laid upon every person to perfect himself." Fatherhood, he said, was one of the ordinary human joys which he had long since renounced.

I recognized now that the Ego, always dominant in woman, must be overcome by me in myself, still bound by many ties to earth. I was to find myself in self-abnegation. I prayed that my body might become the vessel of the beautiful and divine so that my life be filled and fulfilled. How few, if any, of the millions struggling along the world's ways, have ever had or sought the opportunity to find themselves. The leisure after the day's work is not devoted to this higher learning. Time that the wise would spend in meditating on these things is spent at movies, cafés and theaters, created as if by malicious design to hinder contemplation.

Frederick and I rejected all these things and were determined to fight our way to inner freedom in spite of all the hindrances of civilized life. His logical and abstract way of thinking was a revelation to me. It opened up a new world, a world which even this daring and adventurous thinker had not yet explored, and I realized from the start that unless I was prepared to impose upon myself the most rigorous self-restraint and discipline, I never could expect to keep pace with him. I felt in him the triumph of the masculine and was determined, in order not to fall by the wayside, to subjugate the eternal feminine in me as far as possible. Not that the normal relationship between man and woman should be quite rejected. It must, however, not dominate the situation.

"I cannot have a love-sick woman full of romantic notions trailing after me into the wilderness. . . ." Dr. Ritter used to say. This was in the early days, but gradually he saw that I was ready to take whatever the great plan brought with it, and after a while this objection disappeared and he became reconciled to the idea of my accompanying him. I often think, indeed I am quite sure, that this experiment, with the idea of which he had been dallying off

and on for half a lifetime, would never really have been embarked upon but for my insistence. I felt at the time that not my will but a stronger will outside me was urging me to help Frederick to do this thing; and although in the eyes of the outside world it began in stress and ended in tragedy, I still know that it was the right and only thing for us to do.

It reconciled me greatly to Frederick's absolutism when I learned that he was as merciless a taskmaster to himself as for me. His harshness was not personal, therefore I must not take it personally. If he demanded sacrifice of me, his own life was also sacrifice. If he demanded discipline, his own self-discipline was greater than mine would ever be. He reminded me of the prophets of the Old Testament and indeed there was always about him a kind of halo that came from his unalterable and passionate beliefs. He was a John the Baptist who sought the wilderness, not in order to chastise the flesh but to illuminate the mind. His life was not bounded by its span on earth. He is as living to me now, and my belief in him is just as vivid and intense, as in the days when we were together. While some have thought him an eccentric, I know that he was one of the world's geniuses, although his name may go down in obscurity.

He might have been a prophet but he was not morose—sometimes he could shed Elijah's mantle and be very human. He often enjoyed company and was much liked. I have already said that his patients were all fond of him, and they seemed to have as unbounded confidence in him as I myself. He used to tell them that he did not like sick people, and wherever he encountered a case which defeated his attempts to bring about an effort of the "Will to Mend," he would give it up rather than nurse it along like a dead weight. He used to apply his own special method of suggestion to every case, and had infinite faith in the possibilities of will-power. It was his opinion that modern civilization had cast the wholesome will with which everybody is endowed into neglect and degeneracy, substituting money for it and bolstering up its feebleness with convenient substitutes.

A man of such productive intellect was bound to have a thousand theories of his own about everything, and to enjoy expounding

these to others. Dr. Ritter was no exception to this rule, but he was indeed an exception in being at least as good a listener as a talker. His theories often seemed bizarre to many, but this was because he had the courage to push every idea to its logical conclusion, a point beyond which almost all thinkers have lacked the courage to venture. The intrepidity with which he could look things squarely in the face, utterly despising evasiveness and compromise, was perhaps Dr. Ritter's most notable quality. Among the usual run of people it is clear that a man like that would lead a lonely life, and often be forced into the belief that everything was against one who tried to live in absolutes where everything and everybody else lived solely by the grace of compromise. This had been, in a lesser degree, my own experience too, but I think that neither Dr. Ritter nor I ever tended to become melancholy for want of being understood.

It was part of Frederick's creed to lead a life of absolute simplicity, but he never attempted to make proselytes for this or any other of his ideas. Much of his medical research centered round theories of diet. He believed that the problem of dietetics once solved, one would have gone a long way towards eliminating half the illnesses human beings are heir to. He had worked out a dietetic system for various social classes. Though he himself was a vegetarian because he found that this form of nourishment was best suited to his type of labor, he included meat in all the tables he drew up for people of the working class. I quote this only as a very small example of what I think was the rather rare quality in him, of never riding his ideas like a pedant but always modifying them and adjusting them to various needs.

I sometimes look back in amazement at my life during the two years of my association with Dr. Ritter before we left for Galapagos. In my own home I was still obliged to play the model Hausfrau, appearing with my husband at social functions wearing evening dress and high-heeled shoes. With Frederick I was an entirely different being, even in appearance. The clothes I wore with him were simple in the extreme and had no regard for any fashion, but only for comfort and freedom of movement. More than almost all of what he called the evil inventions of modern costume, Frederick

disliked the civilized shoe. He had a different idea of proper human footwear, and made us each shoes of soft leather without heels, sewn to the shape of the feet. We often wore these when we went on walks together.

Compared with my life, Frederick's had been rich in experience. His father had been the burgomaster of Wollbach, a little Baden town, and at the same time a prosperous tradesman. Frederick had a sheltered, happy youth, and all the advantages of a good education. An instinctive love of nature led him to prefer the out-of-doors, which was as great a benefit to his rather delicate constitution as to his youthful mind. As he grew up he often accompanied his father on hunting expeditions in the Black Forest. His mother was a lovable and kindly woman, and the family life was perfectly harmonious. At the University of Freiburg his special subjects were chemistry, physics and philosophy, until he took up medicine. He had married while still almost a boy, only twenty-one years old. His parents had objected to the match, but the young blond girl preparing for a singer's career had seemed like the personification of his ideal of womanhood, and he had married her. He felt that he must help her on her way to fame. He had means enough to see that she had the best masters and he saw to it also that she worked relentlessly. He was the stern overseer of her studies and very soon obtained for her an engagement at the Royal Opera at Darmstadt, where she sang Carmen, Mignon, Amneris and many other rôles.

It reacted badly on the harmony of the marriage that Frederick had a character of extreme aggressiveness while his wife tended to be wholly passive. The war came and Dr. Ritter enlisted as a volunteer. When he returned to civil life he found that his wife had only one desire—to give up her career and devote herself entirely to home. Her ideal was an orderly life with regular routine, and so she managed to persuade him to continue his studies and establish himself in a profession. When I met him he had not long completed his course in dentistry and medicine, and had been married eighteen years.

It would not fail to seem to his wife that in the conventional sense I had appeared upon the scene to snatch her husband from

her just as her dream of life with him was about to be fulfilled. I was extremely unhappy for her, as I was for my own husband.

I conceived the idea that if in some way the two people whose lives had been upset by us could be brought together, then Frederick and I would be absolutely free and unburdened by the thought that we had achieved our happiness at the expense of others' misery. Frau Ritter was a good Hausfrau whose whole affection was for hearth and home. Dr. Koerwin was a man whose ideal woman she certainly represented; he appreciated domestic life in every way. If these two could, by great good fortune, take a liking to each other, our whole problem would be simply and painlessly solved, and I thought that later they might even join us in our Eden. If this solution had not seemed feasible to me I think that I should never have left my husband, because I believed strongly that happiness must never be bought at the price of innocent people's suffering.

It was my plan that Frau Ritter would come into my husband's home and manage his household. This is an occupation which in Germany ladies go in for, and does not imply the social inferiority of the "housekeeper" in other countries. It was of course essential that this arrangement—which actually came to pass—be kept a secret, for the sensation-mongering world, even in a large town like Berlin, is always eager to ferret out unusual situations and make a public scandal of them. But it seemed as though our secret would be kept. I had no difficulty in persuading my husband to make this attempt. However unwilling he might really have felt, he concealed this, doubtless realizing that the situation as it was was not only hopeless but full of danger—he still feared that things might arouse the notice of the neighbors. He even promised to consider the possibility of joining us later on the Galapagos, and as our plan matured, he placed two thousand marks at my disposal. It must not be thought that he did not even up to the last moment try to persuade me from what he thought a mad project. But when he saw that all his pleading was of no avail, he did a strange thing. He made me write a letter explaining why I had left him, and insisted that I write in praise of him and emphasize that we had

had no quarrel, and that he had given me everything I had ever asked of him.

It was with great fear and misgiving and with a feeling of painful suspense that I left for Dr. Ritter's home in Wollbach on a May day in 1929 to meet his wife and his mother. At the same time, he and I were to discuss our final preparations for our migration.

I took along a large array of dresses but I did not wear them. It was Dr. Ritter's wish that I disguise myself as a man in order to escape identification. I was delighted at the success with which I passed for a youth, and both Frederick and I enjoyed my performance in this rôle.

The coldness with which Frau Ritter first received me wore off, and soon she was almost as enthusiastic over our plans as I myself. We even prevailed upon her to fall in with my plan that she should take over my now abandoned household and try and like my husband. I was beside myself with joy as the last obstacle to our venture seemed to have been removed. The Ritter relatives raised great objections and implored Frederick to postpone his going, at least long enough to put his ideas into writing before he left. But he paid no attention to all of this.

Frederick's mother was charming. It was quite natural that she should at first have been reluctant to have her son take me to see her, but no sooner had we met than she embraced me lovingly, and we both wept a little.

I returned to Berlin, leaving Frederick still busy packing and making final preparations to leave his home in Wollbach for the distant Galapagos. It remained to me to break the inevitable news to my own parents. They were pained and shocked. My mother, however, with an understanding for which I shall always be more grateful than I can say, promised to use all her influence to console my husband and Frau Ritter, to keep in touch with them and help them both in every way. My father suffered terribly at the thought of losing me, perhaps forever. I was his favorite child, and his habitual depression always lifted while I was within reach to smile at him and say a cheering word. I knew that it was he who, in the end, would miss me most. It was curious that he had never liked Dr. Ritter, not even in the beginning when I had once wanted the

new friend to meet my people and had taken him home with me. But Frederick thought a great deal of my father.

As for the rest of the world, we rejoiced at leaving it behind. Civilization had no illusions for us. We had no interest in it, and the last thing we ever thought of was that it would ever take an interest in us. All that we both wanted was to be alone and to break free of the bonds of conventional life. We wanted to try and live a new way with neither models nor preconceived ideas to help—or rather hinder us. We wanted no advice and took none. Our work of discovery, whether it would turn out to be great or small, was to be all our own. It was my conviction that Dr. Ritter's experiment as a way of life would lack validity without a woman. But would I, as a woman, be able to rise to these occasions which I knew would come and be an acid test by which even two people who felt that they belonged irrevocably together, must prove the value of their relationship? For all the joy that filled me, I also felt a touch of fear. But I resolved that, come what might, I should be strong.

And so the die was cast and we prepared to go forth to our experiment of more than Puritan self-denial, of repudiation of the flesh in a search for higher spiritual values. We had chosen a place where no one was, for we had learned that it is the contact with unlike natures that destroys the inner harmony of lives. We were to try and found an Eden not of ignorance but of knowledge. We did not know then that the world which we were leaving would pursue us there, to ruin what we made.

Chapter II: THE NEW LIFE BEGINS

How stupid I was! While we were packing and making all our arrangements I often imagined that the time would come when I should not know what to do for boredom. I thought that once we had established our home there, there would be nothing left to do, and I was not sure whether I had in me the power to be happy though idle in a place where there was absolutely no kind of diversion at all. But this, like almost everything else that I imagined, turned out otherwise. I had believed, for instance, that we were just two people quietly setting out in search of themselves, neither asking nor desiring the interest of the world which we were leaving. That we could become of interest to it did not enter our calculations. Yet no sooner had we set foot upon our island than it became the stage on which a drama, so weird and fantastic that no invention could ever have created it, was enacted with us as central characters. We were, of course, not quite so naïve as not to know that if our plans were made known the newspapers would find in them something to feed the public's desire for sensation, and knowing this, we were most careful to do everything with great secrecy.

It was William Beebe's excellent and deservedly famous book about the Galapagos that led to our choice of these islands as our destination. The German sub-title described them as World's End, which added to their charm for us. During the two years' friendship which preceded our decision to join our lives together, it had been one of Frederick's and my chief recreations to plan our flight into the ideal solitudes. We were agreed that the region should be tropical: the harsh, cold climates of the north with their depressing skies were not, we felt, inspiring to people whose lives were to depend entirely on nature. We felt that in a paradise of sunshine our minds would be illuminated and that, in not having to spend our energy in the rough struggle against inclement weather, we should have the more left for that higher struggle in which we were engaged. Also our island must be capable of supplying us with the nourishment we needed. It would not do to be faced with periods when, owing to the unproductive condition of the

ground, we should be compelled to destroy life to feed ourselves; for it was one of our most rigorous principles that the vegetarian habit was the only one conformable to our general idea of life.

It was not tropical abundance ready to the hand that we desired; our ideal was not the land flowing with milk and honey of such South Sea isles as Samoa and Tahiti. On the contrary, much as we needed sunshine to teach us what a life in nature meant, so essentially did we also need the training denied to the civilized of toiling with their hands for everything they needed. I must again emphasize the fact that we were not in any way a pair of modern Crusoes. We have been called this so often that it is perhaps almost useless to contradict it now. Yet nothing was further from our intention than to adopt the foolish prejudice of certain "nature apostles" who have rejected on principle every modern appurtenance and tool. We meant to take everything that would make our gardening of Eden easier and more effective. If, on arriving there, we found that some essential tools were missing from our equipment, this was only because, for all our wish to take the right things, our preparations had been in many ways both ignorant and haphazard. As a result we found ourselves with quite a few superfluous objects and without a great many indispensable ones.

We spent long hours in the State Library in Berlin, searching through geographical works for the island which would best suit our requirements. I must say that Dr. Ritter, though extremely self-willed in every way, showed the most touching regard for any objection I put forward as to our future dwelling-place. Perhaps he felt that this experiment would be more difficult for a woman than for a man, and therefore gave me precedence in the choosing of our actual destination.

It was pleasant to me to learn that these "Enchanted Islands," as the Galapagos Archipelago was originally called, had not derived their enchantment from legends created by human aboriginals, for they had never been the home of native tribes. They had given only a brief hospitality to willing or unwilling visitors, and the enchantment that was upon them caused strange and often evil things to happen. I for one, having been a victim of this magic, am quite convinced that the gods or demons of Galapagos were

the invisible spinners of the fate which overtook not only us, but all those who came there in our time; and I believe that these islands are in truth one of those places of the earth where humans are not tolerated. Naturally, to one brought up as I was, to an exclusively rationalistic creed, this interpretation of what happened to us all on Floreana was not the first but the last that could occur to me. The longer I think back upon it all, and remember the strange and unaccountable circumstances associated not only with our life there but with the lives of all the others whom we met and heard of, the more I am convinced that there was much more under the heaven and in that earth than was dreamt of in our philosophy.

I will not dwell upon the consternation with which the news of our decision was received by all the members of our respective families. Our depot for the things we meant to take with us was the shed in Dr. Ritter's mother's garden. Soon this was filled to overflowing. I fear that our planning was anything but scientific, and it was not until we arrived at Floreana that we discovered to what extent our foolishness had left us in the lurch. But it was too late then to do anything but repent until the ships came by through which we were able to supplement some of the things most seriously lacking. I had often been forced to realize what a poor Hausfrau I was, but never more than on discovering in Floreana that my kitchen equipment, for example, was thoroughly inadequate.

Dr. Ritter proved himself far more practical than I, and displayed great foresight in every way. He carpentered two large boxes with substantial boards, designed for later use as a table top. All breakables were packed in two zinc bathtubs which we bought extremely cheap. Three other wooden cases were so constructed as to serve as cupboards afterwards. Our chief investment both in the way of bulk and money was an equipment of non-rusting metal ware. For a thousand marks we bought an entire set of utensils in this material, including cutlery and dishes and last, but by no means least, two full-sized dairy milk-cans. We thought that these would make an ideal larder to protect our food from invasion by ants. I suppose that this is the place for me to confess that I had over-

looked the fact that one set, however complete, contained table equipment for only one person. The result was that when we found ourselves on Floreana, only one eater was provided for. We two could, of course, make shift with what there was, but when guests came the problem of what we could give them to eat out of was quite a serious one. One of the beautiful stainless-steel trays was so shiny that it could do perfect duty as a mirror. Frederick took a complete carpenter's equipment and a variety of gardening implements. I at least saw to it that there were mattresses, sheets and blankets enough for two, but failed, unfortunately, to take more than one single pillow. My sewing needles were carefully sealed into bottles filled with paraffin in order to prevent their rusting. We further bought a hundred-yard bale of calico for making bags and replacing worn-out clothes. Frederick took his medical instruments and a small supply of drugs. These were chiefly such things as aspirin and digestive tablets. He refused even to consider including morphia in his dispensary, although I urged him to. Later on we were to regret bitterly that he had not done so.

It has often been said of us that as a preliminary to our departure we both had all our teeth extracted. This is not the case. It is true that Dr. Ritter had had all his taken out, but this was some months before we left and for quite a different reason. For years he had been carrying out a system of eating which required an intensive mastication of each mouthful. The result was that he had worn his teeth to stubs, and it had come to the point where he must have them crowned if they were to be of any further use to him. He preferred to have them all removed, especially as he had a scientific desire to find out whether gums might be so far toughened as to become a substitute for teeth in chewing. My own teeth were no better than average, and had always necessitated regular visits to the dentist. On Floreana they were very soon to fail me, and it was then that we realized with sorrow that Frederick had failed to take any dental equipment with him. I had to suffer extractions made under the most primitive, excruciatingly painful conditions.

We left all our good clothes and took only our oldest things along. I took some artificial silk dresses chosen, as I thought, with

great foresight, in the belief that they would be cool to wear. I did not know that they would immediately be set upon by swarms of the cockroaches which infest the island, and completely devoured. All my good clothes I left to Frau Ritter. Though they fitted her and suited her perfectly, I learned afterwards that she had never worn them.

Among the odds and ends of our miscellaneous equipment were a magnifying glass and a pair of opera glasses. We took no fire-arms. When I had suggested to Frederick that we take morphia and a syringe, he had become quite furious, insisting that among the things our future life would teach us was the overcoming of pain by the power of the will. When, later on, he suggested taking a gun, it was my turn to veto, insisting that to do so would be to deny our principle of peace towards all things. Floreana soon taught us how stupid both these decisions were.

Fortunately we did remember mosquito netting, but on the whole when I look back with the wisdom of experience upon our preparations, I shudder to think how inadequate, ignorant and unsystematic they were. We took, for example, only a very few boxes of matches, naïvely expecting that we should be able to do without fire. It was another of our delusions that we should need no lamps, expecting to go to bed at sundown. In the midst of the many things we lacked, it often amused us to contemplate a compass which we had been most careful to include, a thoroughly unessential instrument unless we should go off on some sea-adventure and become shipwrecked. Strange as it may seem, it never occurred to us to take a camera.

Our little library included my greatest treasure, *Zarathustra*, my Greek and Latin textbooks, and a small volume of animal stories by Manfred Kyber. I thought that I should have a great deal of time in which to brush up on things learned at school, but as it turned out there was never any time at all for such pursuits. Frederick took a number of medical works and a large supply of paper, for he intended to devote his spare time to the writing of the great philosophic work which had always been his dream.

Frederick now gave up his practice; there was nothing more for us to wait for. It was the end of June, 1929. The time for the

last farewells had come. A few days earlier Frau Ritter had arrived from South Germany to take up her life in my husband's household. I spent the next two days with her trying to make things easy for her, showing her the places which I had found most satisfactory for shopping and so forth. I was grateful both to her and to my husband for the way in which they tried at this time to conceal the resentment against me which they must have felt. Frederick timed his visits to coincide with my husband's absence at his school, for the mutual dislike of these two men was not, apparently, to be overcome by any such degree of goodwill towards each other as we two women had achieved.

The meeting between my husband and Frau Ritter had passed off with less tension than I had feared. One afternoon at four o'clock when he came home from school he found her there, and when I introduced them he behaved with much calm, so that I could conscientiously tell myself that this experiment, too, was starting favorably. The only thing my husband objected to was calling Frau Ritter by her married name; I suppose it was natural that the name of Ritter could call up only bitter associations in his mind. They arranged that he would call her by her maiden name instead.

Then came the supper which I had planned with great care for the introducing of Frau Ritter into my husband's intimate circle. The guests came early. There were very few: only my mother, my sister, who was then in her early teens, a colleague of my husband's with his wife, and a cousin of ours, an engineer. Dr. Ritter was not invited. There was also a woman friend of mine with whom I had quarreled some time before and had not seen since. This party, ostensibly in honor of Frau Ritter, was in reality my farewell party, though outside the actual family no one knew this. But I, now about to leave my former world forever, could not bear to go without making my peace with everyone I knew. That was why I had invited my former friend, feeling that I had judged her far too harshly and desiring to win her back again before I left. The reconciliation made her very happy, as it did me. I felt that now I could depart with a perfectly calm conscience and with the sense of wronging nobody.

A great melancholy was visibly oppressing my mother, my hus-

band and my sister. I was not blind to this, but still I kept the conversation going brightly, and I knew that none of those not in the secret suspected anything unusual. I think that night was one of the happiest I had ever known. Frau Ritter sang most charmingly. The guests outside the family were told that she was staying with us on a visit until her husband returned from a professional trip. I also hinted that I was about to take a trip abroad. When the time came for everyone to go, my mother and sister, who left with the others, could hardly suppress their tears. Nevertheless my mother's last words were more prophetic than she knew. "I shall see you again," she said, as we kissed each other good-by. The departure had been set for the following day, and by special request nobody was to see us off. I did not tell my mother that Frederick and I meant never to come back.

When the guests were gone, I went into my husband's study. He was quite calm but said, "If you ever do return, I wish you to promise that you will make no attempt to come back to me." I gave this promise readily and then put on my hat, took leave of Frau Ritter, and was ready to leave the house where I had known and perhaps inflicted much pain, and break off forever a marriage and a way of life which had begun as a mistake but which I felt would be a crime to continue. My husband took me to the streetcar. I had no baggage, everything having already been sent to Frederick's place. We walked arm in arm and my husband kissed me good-by. I turned back before entering the car to wave to him for the last time and saw him standing there waving too with a grave and sad expression on his face.

That night I dreamed of the Galapagos as I had dreamt of it, waking and sleeping, so many times before. I saw a beach and turtles of enormous size, and over everything a gloomy sky that gave the scene an air of indescribable desolation. I woke, devoutly hoping that this picture was not prophetic, and fortunately it was not.

Although we had planned never to return, neither Frederick nor I had made a will. The last thing I did was to burn his letters to me so that they might not fall into the hands of strangers. Three of them, however, I kept, putting them in a safe place among my luggage.

Anyone seeing us depart would have thought that we were a pair of week-end trippers. We each carried a rucksack and only the fact that we had a few suitcases between us might have suggested that we were bound for a somewhat longer journey. The suitcases were very heavy and I told Frederick that I thought we ought to take a taxi, for the walk to the street-car was a very long one. But he would not hear of this, insisting that all our theories obliged us to put our will power to this initial test. We therefore staggered under our really quite exaggerated load, and the street-car carried us to the Schlesischer Bahnhof. As the train passed through Charlottenburg, the district where I had spent the four years of my ill-assorted married life, I looked out of the window at the street where my home had been, and felt neither sorrow nor regret. No shadow of doubt obscured my certainty that I had at last started upon the task for which I had been destined. I knew that Frederick was my fate, and was content to let it be so no matter what might come. To go out into the unknown with him was not to go into the unknown at all. I did not feel like an adventurer, nor like an exile. I was not stirred by the excitement of one about to see a world of which he hitherto knew nothing, and to set foot in places few others had seen before or might see in the future. I felt, in spite of all my deep affection for those dear to me, that in leaving them forever I was not uprooting my real self but only an outward part of me that did not count. Neither Frederick nor I had taken with us any photographs of those we loved and had left behind.

We sailed from Amsterdam on July the third, at nine o'clock at night, on the Dutch merchantman *Boskoop*, this being the first sea voyage that either of us had ever experienced. Arrived at Guayaquil four weeks later, we expected that we should be able to leave immediately for Floreana. Instead we found that we should have to wait a whole month, having just missed the schooner that plied between the mainland and the islands of the archipelago. This seemed to us an endless wait, but we were told that others wishing to make the same crossing had often had to possess themselves in patience three or four times as long, for the comings and goings of the *Manuel y Cobos* were most erratic.

I shall never forget the first view of Ecuador as we sailed slowly into the deep bay of Guayaquil. The coast is fringed with dense thickets of mangrove interrupted by settlements where groves of cocoanut palms waved over the heads of the other trees, amidst which cows, donkeys and goats seemed to find plentiful pasture. As we landed with our no doubt somewhat remarkable baggage, it was a great surprise and pleasure to experience nothing but courtesy and helpfulness at the customs. We were not required to open very much, and what we did open was hardly examined, so that this usually unpleasant prelude turned out to have no terrors at all.

We were a conspicuous pair as we wandered about Guayaquil, chiefly because of the fact that we went hatless. In those climates the uncovered head out-of-doors is a thing quite unknown—even the poorest Indios wear something resembling a hat to protect their heads from the fierceness of the sun. Frederick, however, was firm in the belief that the human hair is the best protection for the head, and was not to be persuaded to make concessions to the customs of the country. It had been Frederick's intention that we should sleep in tents while waiting for our ship, but against this I strongly rebelled, protesting that we were quite conspicuous enough already. Finally I won this point, but it was no easy victory.

We visited the German consul for information as to the purchase of land on the Galapagos Islands and learned that the Ecuadorean government had no objections to any settlers making a home wherever they wished to on the islands, but that none of the land was available for purchase. He told us that if we were in a great hurry, having missed our ship, we could be taken to Floreana by airplane, which would cost a hundred dollars; our luggage could come after us. We naturally preferred to wait. From various people we gathered, as we thought, plentiful information about the islands, but when we got there we found that everything was very different from all reports.

The accounts which we had heard of thousands and thousands of wild asses and other livestock roaming about our island made it seem advisable to lay in a good stock of barbed wire. In addition to this we bought rice, peas, sugar beans, and several varieties of maize as well as vegetable seeds. We also added many tins of

crackers, which was something we had never seen before. Suffering an attack of feminine vanity, I made the rash suggestion to Frederick that we also buy a flat-iron. From his hurt expression I could see how deeply this request had disappointed him and how far I still had to go before I could really feel that I had entered upon the spiritual life with all its implications.

A few days later we beheld the *Manuel y Cobos* which was to take us to Galapagos. She had just come in from the islands and looked considerably the worse for wear, tired and bedraggled if ever a ship was. She had brought a cargo of fifty cows and at least as many human beings. The traces these had left had not yet been removed, so that our first visit on board was premature, and neither welcomed nor encouraging.

The story of this ship and of her captain is one of the most remarkable that I have ever heard, even in those far places of the earth where the stories of all the white occupants in permanence are remarkable. This bark, we were told, was over a hundred years old, and looking at her patched and mended hull and its rough interior, we found this easy to believe. The man whose name she bore was that extraordinary Cobos who towards the end of the 19th century assumed possession of the island of Chatham in the Galapagos group. We found that the story of this self-appointed ruler, as told by the Ecuadoreans, tallied in almost all its amazing details with the account of him which we had read in William Beebe's book. His sinister personality seemed to have communicated itself to the ship, his namesake. There was something gloomy and uncanny about it which had nothing to do with its dilapidated state and present dirtiness. Later on, when the Baroness Wagner appeared on Floreana as its "Empress," we thought that she too, waiting in Guayaquil for this same ship, and hearing, as she must have done, the story of Cobos, received much inspiration from it.

Dark stories of violence clung to this ghost-like vessel which was to be our only link with the world of men. Very often, waiting in vain for its arrival at Floreana—for it was usually unpunctual —I used to wonder what nameless errand it was carrying out. When it came, it always seemed to me more heavily laden with a cargo of secret guilt than with the innocent commodities it

brought us. I never could forget, when looking at it, how many times during the long century of its existence it had been used to transport the unhappy men whom Cobos sent into exile on the other islands, to perish hideously of thirst and hunger. The whole fatal history of the Galapagos Archipelago seemed concentrated in this ancient ship, whose old planks could have told a story of human savagery and ruthlessness which never will be chronicled.

I can describe the skipper of the *Manuel y Cobos* no better than by saying that he was the kind of man one would have imagined her master to be. Not that he looked the part. He was a bluff and cheery individual with the ruddy blondness and the blue eyes of his Norwegian race. He was a man of about fifty-five, and had been in the service of his country's navy or mercantile marine —nobody seemed to know quite which. Captain Bruuns had been a well-known figure in Ecuador ever since his arrival there shortly after the war. All Europeans coming to those parts as he did, and remaining, are safely assumed to have a "story." It was a Norwegian settler on one of the islands who spread the legend about Captain Bruuns. No doubt it was a true one. During the war he had misused his flag's neutrality to act as a spy in Germany's pay, and had surrendered secrets of the British naval campaign to the German government. Many British ships cruising the North Sea had been sunk as the result of these data. Word of this espionage came to the ears of the Norwegian government, and Captain Bruuns was compelled to escape from the pursuit of the law.

We found that it was commonly believed along the Ecuadorean coast that Captain Bruuns' services to Germany had culminated in his betrayal of the presence of Lord Kitchener upon an English man-of-war and the route the ship was to take on the ill-fated voyage from which England's great hero never returned. Whether this was the true clue to one of the strangest mysteries of the War, doubtless no one will ever know, but there was something about this Captain Bruuns that suggested a man with more than ordinary secrets locked up in his bosom.

He had arrived one day in the Caribbean Sea, having come all the way from Europe in a minute craft called the *Isabella*, which, with its one mast and general frailty, looked hardly capable of

more than little fishing trips close up to the land. He must have had either extraordinary luck or still more extraordinary skill to have navigated himself and his crew of three all those thousands of miles into the port of Guayaquil. His mysterious arrival had naturally aroused all kinds of inquiries, and he was found to possess no identification papers of any kind. He explained this lack by pitching an amazing yarn about a kind of typhoon which had overtaken them at sea, and swept the contents of his cabin completely overboard. That the Ecuadorean authorities provided him with a brand-new set of captain's papers was most likely due less to credulity than to admiration for his astonishing feat. Captain Bruuns then entered the service of Alvarado, the son of Manuel y Cobos, who had inherited the ancient ship. During our time on Floreana, the *Manuel y Cobos* changed owners, being taken over by a trading company which rechristened her more non-committally, *San Cristobal.* When last I saw her she was all dressed up in a fine new coat of paint, and nobody who had not seen her in her natural aspect would ever have suspected the sinful soul that lurked behind that trim exterior. But I am certain that one day that soul will burst forth and astonish her confiding present owners.

Captain Bruuns, having found his way to that region of the earth which offers such kindly anonymity to many strange existences, had, at the time we knew him, arranged his new life on a seemingly profitable basis. We never actually found out which of his many enterprises were his alone, or how far he had to pay tribute to Alvarado, but his trading interests were many and varied. He told us that the island offered numerous possibilities for making money, though some of the fields he had exploited had proved disappointing. I seldom met a man so full of projects. We wondered what he did with all his money, and learned afterwards that he sent it almost all back home to Norway, retaining very little for himself. I thought this a consoling trait in this otherwise sinister personality and sometimes wondered what kind of man he had been in the days before the great temptation overcame him.

He was very much interested in our intention to settle permanently on Floreana whence, so he told us, he drew a good part of his large supply of cattle hides. He had a Norwegian on the

island whom he employed to slaughter the beasts and dry and cure their flesh for which the Ecuadorean butchers paid a fair price, also to cure their hides, which could be disposed of at considerable profit. The same Norwegian was also Captain Bruuns' fisherman, so that all in all he had a great deal to do, but not enough pay to make it worth his while. Moreover the hard work was too much for one man, with only a young boy to help him, but Captain Bruuns would not employ any other assistant. Captain Bruuns explained to us the great commercial possibilities offered by the very numerous herds of wild cattle on the island and the abundance of fish around the coast. He hoped to win us as employees in the discontented Norwegian's stead, or perhaps as partners, and was eloquent in pointing out to us the advantages of associating ourselves with him. Frederick, however, made it very plain that he had not been lured to the islands by any hope of material benefits, which seriously disappointed the good skipper. If Captain Bruuns had lived, it is not unthinkable that the Galapagos might have become an important trading center of the Southern Ocean, but the hostile gods of Floreana, no less inimical to the seekers of material than to the seekers of spiritual riches, were to thwart him too in the realization of his plans.

On Saturday, the 31st of August, at four o'clock in the morning, we stood on board the *Manuel y Cobos* waiting to leave at last for our enchanted island. But somehow or other the captain was not there. In his stead, two young lads came up to us and begged us to take them with us in such a touching way that it pained us to have to refuse. It was almost two hours later when our skipper appeared, much flurried, having had a little brush with the port officers, it seemed. We saw him relating this with somewhat suspicious animation to his lord, if not master, Alvarado, with whom we also had the honor to be traveling. I dare say that little hitches of this kind must have been a very frequent occurrence between the skipper of this notorious bark and the defenders of the law.

A brilliant early morning sun shone down on our departure from the haunts of men, as we set out upon the final stage of our long journey to the solitudes of our desire. We thought and hoped that

we should never recross the broad six-hundred miles of ocean that lay between our island and the mainland. As we moved out of the little harbor and watched it receding slowly from our sight, we felt a oneness with each other which we had never felt before, and if we thought about the past at all, then it was with an utter absence of regret, and with a feeling of deep happiness and gratitude to the fate which had permitted us to approach our goal at last.

Floreana was the third island called at by the *Manuel y Cobos* upon her round, before proceeding on a fishing-trip during which she would put in at other islands and then return to San Cristobal. Captain Bruuns suggested that we put our cargo ashore at Post Office Bay, as Floreana's best harbor was called, and visit the remainder of the archipelago as his guests. We accepted this invitation gladly, and so our first landing on our island of good hope was very temporary and hurried.

A copious leakage of motor-oil in the hold had ruined all our books and writing paper, all the bedclothes and at least one box of clothes. What this accident was to cost us later in labor and annoyance I mercifully did not know as we unloaded crates and cases, inspecting them superficially as we did so.

Former Norwegian settlers had built a solid house at Post Office beach and here their successor, referred to by the captain, had his abode. There were traces of a chicken coop of considerable size; a stone wall, almost a yard high, surrounded the house and there were also water-tanks for the storing of rain-water during the brief weeks when the island was not completely parched. There was even unmistakable evidence of a tennis and a croquet ground, though these had probably not been used for many a long year. An atmosphere of extreme desolation enfolded this scene, and was increased by the almost completely dried-up, lifeless vegetation round about it. It was impossible not to think, with a qualm of fear, of all the disappointed hopes of our predecessors on this island, who probably had come there with confidence no less than ours that they would be able to make their lives according to their hearts' desire.

There was another person on the island, an Indio lad of four-

teen years of age named Hugo. The Norwegian's term of service was over, and he was returning on the *Cobos* when she brought us back. We interviewed Hugo, and arranged with him to work for us for a month, which he seemed pleased to do.

On the 19th of September, after a fascinating trip to some of the other islands which pushed high out of the sea, huge, rugged mounds of volcanic stone, the coast of Floreana showed on our horizon for the second time—a sight which I was not to experience again until years later, when I beheld it on my homeward voyage to the Europe I thought then I had left forever. I came to Floreana together with my life's ideal companion and with a dream intact, and left it with the dream in fragments and the dear companion in his grave.

We landed on the island, our hopes as cloudless as the sky against which the great extinct volcano darkly rose. The landscape spread out at its feet had the gray-blue shimmer of all the Galapagos vegetation. What looked like dense thickets at the crater's edge was much greener and fresher than the growth below. Thin streamers of clouds floated low down among the smaller craters towards the interior of the island, and at the water's edge more volcanoes stood up straight out of the sea, steeply, though to no great height. Their rocky flanks were full of deep clefts which caught the incoming surf, so that the island was encircled by a tossing white girdle of the breaking sea. As the waves receded they revealed huge boulders of pitch-black lava.

I had hoped that I should set foot upon the soil of our promised land with a feeling of such peace and happiness as I had never known. Instead of this, no sooner had we landed than I was taken very ill and Frederick had much trouble in restoring me. I had not realized what toll the suspense and anxieties, the fatigue and excitement of our protracted journey, had taken of my frail constitution. But now, in a rush and without warning, I collapsed completely. The attack fortunately did not last long, and as soon as I was able to stand on my feet again Frederick and I, forgetful of all practical matters, took each other by the hand and started to go inland on our island like the two children of our German fairy-tale, setting forth to find the treasure at the rainbow's end.

It might have been wiser if we had not done so, for on returning to the beach we found that Captain Bruuns had his anchor up and that the *Manuel y Cobos* was already leaving Post Office Bay. Hugo was nowhere in sight. We went into the log house which we had inherited from the now departed Norwegian, and found to our dismay that the plentiful store of crockery which had been there was all gone. We remembered that Captain Bruuns had said that he was the owner of the house and its contents, but we had meant either to buy the dishes from him or to ask him to leave them for our use. In the emotion of our long-dreamed-of arrival we had forgotten all about it.

We were alone at last. We looked at one another and repeated these words like a magic formula. The desolation that had so distressed me at first sight, the house and the abandoned cultivation round it, did not sadden me now. I forgot the wasted hope and toil it bore witness to, and thought only, full of my own hope and assurance, that we had come to make an Eden here and that *we* could not fail.

The red rays of the setting sun gilded the ocean at our feet. The sharp black fins of sharks cut through the water; a thousand wild voices of unseen creatures mingled with the soft roar of the surf. With the terrifying suddenness to which I, the Northerner, never grew accustomed, the equatorial night rushed down upon us and the moon came up.

Chapter III: WE FIND OUR EDEN

WE ROSE NEXT MORNING WITH THE SUN, EAGER TO celebrate the first day on our island.

In the bright morning sunshine the cabin and its surroundings presented a more dismal picture than in the kindlier light of the evening before. The rough house, known as the Casa Matrix, had been founded as long ago as 1922, and was almost the only one of all the Norwegians' dwellings which had withstood the ravages of the wild weather on the coast. But even it was in deplorable condition, its roof riddled with holes. The large iron rain-water tanks were eaten away with rust. There had been a dynamo constructed to supply the settlement with electric light, but all these modern innovations, too, had fallen into utter uselessness and dilapidation, and the rust covered them like a fungus. There was an iron crane, though what this had been used for we could not tell. It stood there idle, lifting up its rusty arm with a gesture that might have been an entreaty or a warning.

In fact, Post Office Bay was the only spot on our enchanted island that I disliked from the first. I could not tell exactly why, especially considering that its snow-white beach is by far the prettiest on the island with its long promontories of cactus-covered, glistening lava-rock. The bay owed its name to a romantic circumstance. Long before settlers had attempted to inhabit the island, whalers bound for the far Antarctic used to put in there in order to deposit in a large hogshead, mounted on a pole, letters to their home-folk. The dangers of their calling, which led them into the world's most perilous waters, might bring sudden death to them at any moment, and in those days there was little chance of help, and no means of sending either S O S or news of disaster. This cask post office, then, received their letters, which fellow whalers or other passing ships collected as they passed the island, and thus the families received news of their loved ones. It was strange to find in that deserted place something already historic like this hogshead. Every time we saw it I was reminded of those by-gone adventurers and often wondered what had happened to them.

To me there was something about Post Office Bay that seemed

to bode or harbor evil. The tall cactuses standing up against the sky looked to me like weird sentinels ever on the watch for strange things about to happen. But at the same time there was something ludicrous in those imposing watchers, for impressive as they looked, I knew that the slightest push could topple them over. That is the odd thing about the Floreana soil—it can be made to bear rich life, but is so shallow that nothing can take firm root in it. Perhaps there was in that too an omen for us, but neither of us knew it then.

Within the smooth curve of the bay, the Pacific waters lay so calm and blue that they reminded one almost of the lakes of home. But hardly an hour would pass before the vicious wedge of a shark's fin would cleave the mirror-like surface of the ocean, followed by another and another. The delights of swimming were denied us in our beautiful retreat, and this disappointed me somewhat at first, for I had hoped to experience here that oneness with the sea which is unattainable to those whose country lies in the cold region of the northern oceans. On the day of our first landing we had ventured out to the end of the decrepit pier which the settlers had built, and I had said to the Norwegian that I should never dare to risk entering that shark-infested water. He had answered reassuringly that they were really not so bad, and often were quite satisfied to take only an arm or a leg of swimmers, not always demanding the whole man.

But on this first morning of our life on Floreana there was little time to spend in contemplation of the landscape. I was so eager to be up and going on our exploration of the island that I could hardly wait for Frederick to complete his preparations. I think I could not myself have said what magic scene I expected would be unfolded to our eyes in the interior—I only knew that I had never been more happy nor filled with such golden anticipation. The books we had read described Floreana as the most valuable of the Galapagos Islands by reason of the fact that it possessed four springs. Considering the islands' extreme aridity, this was a comparatively good water supply, but it had apparently not sufficed to sustain the lives of a modest number of settlers for any length of time. For us, however, it would be enough.

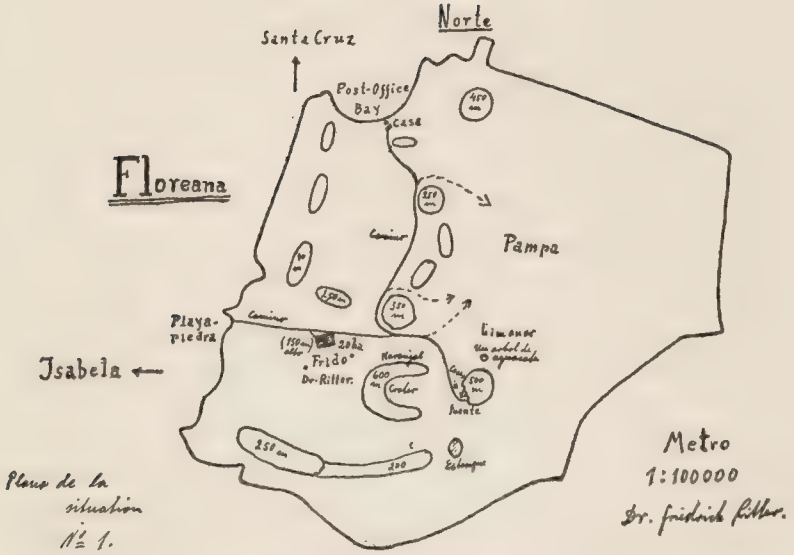
None of the travelers' accounts of Floreana which we had come across had run to mapping out the island with its special features, nor had they vouchsafed any indication as to where the springs were situated or how far they were from one another. In spite of having in the Casa Matrix a stout house ready to receive us, we did not for a moment consider making Post Office Bay our residence. I did not like the place, and Frederick did not want to live so close to the island's edge.

Far from spending our first day in idle and romantic contemplation of our new domain, or aimless roaming, no sooner had we risen than Frederick was already planning the day's task—an expedition of discovery, in search of the springs.

While we were waiting to set out, I noticed how the young plant shoots that we had brought with us and left outside the cabin had all been badly nibbled by the chickens which the settlers had left behind. As I watched the half-starved creatures anxiously scratching the ground for what meager nourishment they could find there, I did not resent their having pilfered our banana and sugar cane, but resolved that wherever we lived, I should have a coop where I would keep them and give them proper food. I did not like to feel that such harmless, useful creatures should be simply neglected and left to starve.

The Indio boy Hugo warned us to take care that all our foodstuffs were put well out of the way of ants and other insects before we left. We took his advice, knowing what would happen if we did not, for we had been told about the depredations caused by ants upon the island. The sugar went into a disused gasoline can which we suspended from the roof. These protective measures duly carried out, we then filled our rucksacks with provisions for three days, for we did not know how far our exploration would take us nor what adventures might prevent our returning to the house the same day. It was well that we did so.

The Norwegian settlers, among other legacies, had left two dogs behind. These were Hugo's good friends, and they crowded barking round him now like a pack of hunters. They were a kind of setter, less wild than most of the other animals on the island which had emancipated themselves from domestication. They too



Plano de la situation
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were a rather hungry lot, though this surprised me afterwards when I saw the wholesale slaughter of cattle in which Hugo was wont to indulge. While we strapped our heavy rucksacks on our backs Hugo shouldered his dearest possession, an old-fashioned gun, which had been given him by Captain Bruuns, and our great trek began.

An enchantment lay upon the day; a more than natural beauty seemed to invest the whole island. The light was different from the light of other days, the air was sweet, the landscape full of more than earthly charm. The sun-parched, lifeless Galapagos brush seemed different here from the same vegetation on Isabella and Santa Cruz. There I had had no desire to penetrate the jungle that their matted thickets formed, but now I could hardly wait, while Frederick bravely hacked a path wide enough for us to push our way through. That is to say, a path existed, worn by the giant turtles in centuries of toilsome journeying between the seashore and the springs; but the turtles had long since gone away from Floreana, and the merciless tropic growth had overgrown their road, so that it was hardly even to be traced. Frederick led the way, slashing his sharp knife downwards with a strong stroke. I, pressing too close to him in my eagerness to see what lay ahead, received a cut in my finger. It was not a very deep cut, but as I took out my handkerchief to wipe away the blood, I thought how incongruous this symbol of civilization looked in such surroundings.

We came to the first lava field. To the eye it was small enough, certainly not more than fifty yards, but to the feet—more accurate judges—it was at least five miles. The lava stones were sharp as knives. One felt in crossing them that they might have been invented by the designers of medieval torturers, so fiercely did they lacerate even the shod feet. How Hugo could walk upon them on his bare soles was more than I could ever understand. The stones lay about, loose, like pebbles, so that it was all that one could do to keep one's footing. But to have fallen would have meant many and painful gashes. We picked our way with all the care we could, Frederick and I stumbling cautiously, Hugo and the dogs bounding agilely ahead, and crossed five bad stretches like this within an hour. The strips of land connecting the lava fields were

hardly less strewn with fragments of the same jagged, granite-like stone, but limy earth between supported a growth of grass and scrub. When we had gone steadily for an hour, we called a halt and looked back along the way we had come. Almost unconsciously we had been climbing uphill, and found ourselves now well advanced towards the slope of the highest mountain on the island. Its broad base loomed up before us, very near. Hugo said that we must use this peak as our guide, for we should be returning to Post Office Bay by the same route. We turned from the view of the green flanks of the volcano, whose crater now sent forth no more blasting streams of lava to destroy all the life over which they poured, and saw the five lava beds we had crossed, descending in a straight line, one behind the other, to the sea. "We have come here five hundred thousand years too soon," said Frederick. "The few centuries since this volcano ceased to be active have hardly sufficed for life to take root here. These dull and leafless acacias and straw-like grass will give place some day to rich and abundant vegetation, if the water supply can in some way be made adequate."

The gray-blue of the lower island lightened to a pale green towards the mountain-top, and as we ascended the path we were astonished at the difference in the vegetation. We came upon lemon trees, their branches heavily laden, and the ground around them strewn with fallen fruit. I stooped and picked the fruit up from the ground; it was the first time I had ever seen a lemon growing. We had now come high enough on the mountainside to be able to observe what differences the moister air produced in all that grew there. Not only plants, but also animals could thrive in this more favored district, and we saw where cattle and swine had trodden trails like a snakes-and-ladders board into the earth. From a distance wild donkeys gazed at us, with a detached expression in their soft eyes.

Suddenly the dogs broke into loud barking and leaped wildly ahead, Hugo plunging after them. We heard a shot, and a few moments later Hugo came racing proudly back, with the announcement that he had killed a boar. Every German knows what boar-hunting is, how dangerous the quarry, and how nimble and clever

a hunter needs to be to attack these fierce beasts in an undergrowth. I could not help admiring Hugo's feat and told him so, but Frederick received the news in disapproving silence. Hugo told us that it was necessary to provide his dogs with meat, which was, he said, indispensable to them; a good store of it must always be on hand for them, he instructed us, otherwise they would become mangy. We then, though with much distaste and reluctance, helped him to dismember the creature's carcass, cutting the flesh into long strips, which we hung on the boughs of a tree, well out of reach of the other half-starved dogs running wild upon the island. It was a very lean boar, like all the abandoned livestock of the former settlers. It did not seem to have been able to find food enough for even its rough requirements, and I began to understand why Captain Bruuns' interest in the island cattle was rather on account of their hides than of their meat—there was certainly no pasture to speak of.

We found that Hugo was in the habit of killing to his heart's content, but that he never made use of more than a small part of the animals he slaughtered. Frederick insisted that this must now stop, and told Hugo that if he must continue with his shooting he should in future use up one whole beast before doing away with another. Hugo was extremely hostile to this arrangement and protested that his method was that of all the hunters who had come to Floreana, who took only the best cuts and left the rest to rot. Frederick, however, found this a most abominable practice, which he would on no account tolerate. He disapproved of all slaughter, but where it had to be, it should be reduced to a minimum.

Our unsavory task fulfilled, we then went on. We had not gone far before our ears caught the sharp yelping of wild dogs, and I thought that we must be coming to a human habitation. This was a very strange sensation, for I knew that except for Hugo and the old Norwegian there had been absolutely no one on the island. Yet the feeling persisted, and suddenly the atmosphere was full of ghostliness.

Yes, if there were other people on the island, they were there not in the living body but as ghosts. The magic sunlight of the day seemed to turn cold and paler. I repeated to myself that we

were alone, that if I sensed the presence of others, it was illusion. Illusion like Frederick's love. Like a cold wind the knowledge had passed over my heart that Frederick did not love me. Ever since the early morning of this day which had begun so magically, I had been conscious of a change in him. But until an hour ago I had ascribed the strangeness of his manner to his concentration on the circumstances of our new life, the finding of a new site to settle on, the many preoccupations of the male about to found his abode, whether it be a castle or a rude shelter in the wilderness. Now something told me that he had banished love from his new life, and that I must learn to do without it.

Putting this dismaying thought out of my mind as best I could, I chatted with little Hugo, child of nature, who seemed so well adapted to the wild landscape with his animal grace, his wantonness, his simple mind, cunning with the cunning of an animal, and cheerful with an animal's unthinking acceptance of its life's conditions. In my pleasure at watching and talking to Hugo, I had not noticed Frederick's taciturnity, for he was often taciturn. But all at once I became aware of it. It seemed as if a dark cloud enveloped him, he hardly answered when I spoke to him. I went on for a while in silence, trying to guess what it was that had come over my dear companion. I knew that it would not do to ask him. Then all at once I caught a glance which flashed from his eyes to the nimble figure of Hugo, running along ahead of us with his dogs like the very spirit of that wild place. Frederick was jealous. The man of intellect, the disillusioned heir of all the centuries of civilization and culture, was jealous of a little Indio savage with his native skill, his oneness with the world he had been born into. It was resentment of the problem-ridden mind towards the problem solved.

I felt deeply hurt, but could not have told whether my pain was for the pain I knew that Frederick was suffering or for myself at glimpsing, as we all must glimpse at times, the feet of clay on which even the most exalted human gods must walk. I felt that Frederick's smouldering rage was chiefly that of sheer wounded masculine conceit, and the fear that I was silently comparing him with the wild grace and beauty of the young Indio boy, to his own

disadvantage. Perhaps he thought that in his stumbling, awkward progress through this rough landscape, which seemed to offer no hindrance whatever to the lad Hugo, he might even be appearing slightly ridiculous in my eyes. Knowing him so well, I could divine all his unspoken thoughts, but it was quite impossible for me to answer them, because I felt that though I might learn that he had faults, Frederick should never doubt that he would always be for me the highest earthly being. I could never think of judging him by paltry worldly standards, or subject him to the superficial and thoughtless comparisons by which one judges ordinary people, one against the other. I had left the world for him as utterly as if we had crossed the barrier of death together and entered into another life beyond. I had done so without question and without reserve, and knew that there could be no hardship too severe, no test too arduous, for me to endure for his sake. I felt that he owed it to me to understand the absoluteness of my faith in him, and when I saw his certainty, which no shadow of doubt ought ever to have clouded in his mind, all undone by a foolish little outward thing, I was assailed by a deep distress. Feeling that worse doubts and bitterer conflicts were about to come, I was filled with anger towards Frederick, and for a moment wished poor Hugo at the bottom of the sea. But before my tears had time to overflow, I reminded myself that this was, after all, a trifling matter, and that it was my first duty and only hope of happiness to let no trifle interfere with the fulfillment of our great mission. I had fought a short, fierce battle with myself and won. And when I spoke again to Frederick, the strain had left my voice as it had left my heart, and I imagined that by some strange transference of thought I had communicated to Frederick also the serenity that had returned to me. He smiled again, and I knew that all was well. Then I forgot ourselves and gave myself up again completely to the ever-changing landscape. I looked about me, and it seemed to me once more that this island of our dream was the most beautiful island in all the world.

In this state of peace restored, and of happiness which no words can describe, we reached our first day's destination—the caves of Floreana. Before entering the largest of these recesses in the moun-

tainside we stood awhile to gaze upon the wild, romantic landscape of our island, which lay outspread at our feet in strange and unimagined beauty. Towards the south the ocean swept away to the distant horizon, and from the moderate elevation where we stood, we could detect no sign of any of the other islands. We might have been the only living people in the world. It was at once an awe-inspiring and delicious feeling. Directly facing us, the majestic crescent of Naranjal reared its two thousand feet above the level of the blue Pacific floor. Innumerable towards the right the other craters rose like buoys out of the land. Green in the near distance, darker farther off, they stood against the clear sky or in relief against the misty blue-gray of the earth below them, a never-to-be-forgotten sight. They might have been the burial mounds of gods; they made one think of the pyramids and other man-made monuments to royal dead. We knew that on the other side of the mountain on which we stood lay the wide stretch of pampas grass with the herds of roaming wild cattle. It seemed strange to know of so much life abroad upon this island, where nothing but ourselves seemed to exist.

When we could tear ourselves away from the rapt contemplation of our domain, we turned our steps towards the caves. I had expected these to be of quite imposing size, but this was not the case. The largest was hardly more than three yards square and seemed to have been excavated by human hands, whereas the rest were natural. I must confess that it was not without a slight recoil that I followed Frederick in. We had heard such gruesome stories of its former inhabitant, the man Watkins, lunatic and murderer, that I could not suppress a shudder at the thought of crossing his dark threshold. I imagined him crouched within its shadow, scanning the shoreline for the hapless sailors ill-fate brought into his clutches. It was said that he would lure them onto the beach; then cut their boats adrift and make slaves of them. The story went that when he departed from the island on his final voyage to the mainland, he was accompanied by several others; but he arrived alone, and no one doubted but that he had done the others all to death. This terrible being had lived in an interior which seemed to express his personality. At least I so preferred to think,

though actually our informants had not been sure whether the fearful Watkins had actually lived in this cave or in a hut now disappeared which was said to have been on the very spot where our own house was afterwards to stand.

The cave's arched entrance revealed two benches hewn into either wall and a hole which had apparently served as a hearth. The walls were black with soot and the place contained an improvised bed made of a sheet of corrugated iron with a layer of grass between it and its tarpaulin covering. Many a hunter of the wild cattle must have rested his weary bones on this unyielding couch. I bent down to pull the sailcloth straight, and as I did so a huge rat jumped out. I sprang back in horror and disgust but the creature, no less terrified than I, scurried away. A stone's throw from the mouth of the cave, we saw our first fresh-water spring. It gushed down the side of the cliff like a miniature waterfall. A tiny oasis of ciruela trees and a miniature orange grove had come into being within the radius of its off-flow, and a short way off stood a magnificent aguacate tree full of fruit, and a guava.

The water of the spring wandered down the wide gulley between the two volcanoes. It made a short and marshy bed between scattered lava boulders. Quite different plants grew here from any we had yet seen on the island. The richly laden fruit-trees told again of men's attempt to tame this wild nature to their needs. We caught sight of a plough half buried, like a symbol of despair, under the encroaching vines which it had been brought there long ago to keep at bay. Down on the beach beside the rusty cistern and the rusty crane we had seen another plough, lying where its owners had abandoned it. Seeing its fellow here, I supposed that they had not even thought it worth while to transport it up the mountainside.

I was enchanted by the beauty of this spot, and the reminder of others' failure, which the vine-grown plough betokened, did not seem discouraging enough to me to make it necessary to look any farther for a place where we should settle. I liked the thought of living within the protecting walls of the two volcanoes, that rose like massive ramparts on either hand, grim in certain lights, but unassailable by wind and weather. They reminded me of the

tall bluffs within whose shelter many a medieval castle in my own country had been built; and I could almost imagine myself as a new kind of chatelaine of another kind of "Burg."

But Frederick, his sound good-sense not obscured, like mine, by mists of romantic dreaming, pointed out that this place was quite impossible to settle in. He showed me how the steep hillside would have to be terraced for our plantation, and made me see what inordinate labor this would entail. Of course, I had to admit the rightness of what he said and accept his objections, but it cost me a pang of disappointment, which I hoped he did not notice. Nor did I know how grateful I would be to him afterwards for having decided against establishing ourselves in this magic valley; for it was destined later to become the stage of the strange melodrama of which the Baroness Wagner-Bousquet was author and protagonist. The whole world knows at least a version of the story of this woman who emerged on Floreana out of an obscure Paris background and "took possession" of the island, on which she planned to raise a luxurious hotel for American millionaire yachters in those parts. This gilded plot was the one she had devised, and she had planned a happier dénouement. She could not know that human beings on Floreana might dream but would never be allowed to live the dramas they invented, and that she, like ourselves, was to be merely a puppet in the real play composed, staged and directed by the island gods.

We spent the night in Watkins' cave, lighting a fire in the primitive fireplace to drive the dampness out. We must have looked like shipwrecked folk or buccaneers ourselves, as we sat round it with our faces lit up by the flames, a white woman dressed roughly enough, a white man with already a heavy growth of beard upon his face and a wild mane of hair, and the dark-eyed Indio boy telling creepy stories of the island's history. Hugo was ardent in his assurances that the persuasions of neither gods nor men would ever have induced him to spend a night alone in that cave of evil memory. As if to heighten the atmosphere of eeriness, a wind, weird and more ghostly than a wind in Europe, had suddenly come up announcing, Hugo told us, rain for the morrow. It blew across the mouth of the cave with a peculiar moan; it

was not like a wind, but like a train of specters gliding past, each uttering a sigh of sharp despair as if imploring help of the living folk within the place. Hugo, terrified in spite of our sobering presence, told us in a mere whisper of a voice how everyone who had ever heard this wind talked of it ever afterwards with shuddering fear.

The following morning we looked out on a landscape completely enveloped in the delicate mist which passes for rain at this altitude. Its season is a protracted one, from May to November, and though the supply of moisture it provides is meager, it is enough to keep the summits green even before the real rains come.

Our destination for the second day was the wide *pampa* lying to the northeast of the caves, a dry and grassy plain of surprising extent, considering the size of the whole island. If we were looking forward to seeing this new landscape, Hugo was in a state of almost wild excitement. He could hardly wait for us to be gone; all the passionate Indio hunter in him was aroused, though he had already begun to understand that there was a world of difference between his present master and the old Norwegian, and knew that if he was to be permitted any shooting it would be very little, and that the chase rather than the kill would be his day's enjoyment.

It had not been our intention to molest the wild herds on the island, but we needed a horse to transport our effects from Post Office Bay to wherever our future home would be. The Norwegian had assured us that this would be the easiest matter in the world, but he proved over-optimistic. Others of the settlers had had three horses regularly in their service, and we had been told that one of those was as "tame as any cab-horse."

We turned our faces from the lovely valley and made our way to the brow of the hill. There, spread out at our feet, lay the wide *pampa.* Almost as though they had come in obedience to a call, we saw the three horses moving in the tall grass. We climbed down the slope and approached them. It was our plan to come at them from three sides, and they allowed us to get quite near. Hugo, armed now not with a firearm but with a lasso, was not successful. After one abortive attempt to catch the nearest horse,

he swung his thong so violently that all three tossed up their heads, snorted, and galloped away to a safe distance, where they stopped to look back at us, with what I thought an expression of polite triumph. Frederick then tried a less dashing method, with far greater success. He went up to the senior of the trio, an old stallion, and talked to him coaxingly. The horse showed no fear, and even suffered its mane to be stroked. When, however, the stroking hand turned to a grip of would-be possession, the old horse reared and struggled. Frederick called to Hugo to come over and help him before the horse could get away; but the Indio boy had no taste for attack at such close quarters, and refused to budge. Frederick's inexperience in horse-breaking rendered him helpless with this rebellious beast, which might once have been as docile as a cab-horse but had since certainly acquired a strong preference for freedom and a considerable determination to keep out of the hands of men as long as he could. Frederick was forced to let him go. But the encounter had disturbed the confidence of the peaceful three, and one of them turned and galloped up the slope down which we had come. It was old, but fear of captivity lent it speed. We followed and cornered it outside the cave. The noose of slavery enclosed its smooth, brown neck, and I saw that though its beautiful eyes were still wide with fear, it became quite calm at the touch of the yoke, and seemed to remember immediately what the demeanor of a horse that had become again a beast of burden should be. Its long previous service must have broken its spirit. It had known a brief time of freedom once again, but this was over and it was quite resigned. I patted its soft nose and it whinnied, turning its soft and limpid eyes upon me without enmity. Its fellows on the *pampa* answered it, but kept their distance.

We had caught our horse. As we tethered it to a tree, we felt that for two city dwellers we had done a good day's work here in the wilds. Our success encouraged us to fresh activity, and although it was not our plan to settle in this spot, we set ourselves to cutting down almost a whole thicket of a willow-like bush that grew about the cave. We finished this work by the day's end, and slept our second night under the buccaneer Watkins' somber roof, tired and content.

The mist had long dispersed before the next morning's sun rose and we came forth again into a bright world. We had decided to go back to the Casa, for the oasis as a permanent site was hopelessly impracticable. Hugo went ahead leading our horse; we followed at a comfortable pace, enjoying the exquisite morning. Now and then we stopped to gather lemons and eat an orange from the tree. It struck us forcibly that the lemons lying on the ground had been left untouched by all the passing birds and animals, while the oranges had almost all been either pecked at or eaten up.

We distinguished, on this walk, five different kinds of birds, one little gray one very like our European sparrow. The beaks of others showed that they were insect eaters; they were to prove our valued allies later on in a long and bitter war against the insect pests upon the island. One had a red head and breast, another was yellow and very dainty, and still another proudly showed a coat of brilliant gold. Like most birds of the southern hemisphere, these had been denied the gift of song. As on our walk in the interior of Isabella, the birds were absolutely fearless. They showed the prettiest interest in us, and followed us along the whole long route. They fluttered close, and one even settled on my head. They perched upon our arms and shoulders, inspecting with their bright eyes these strange new denizens of their wilderness.

All at once we saw the sea again; its lovely blue expanse stretched away to the remotest edge of space. Faint in the northwest rose the blue outline of the island Isabella. We glanced down towards the coast, expecting to see the white curve of Post Office Bay, but it was not there. We saw no sand at all, but only a black rim of lava that outlined the coast. Clearly, we had missed our way, going westward where we should have turned off towards the north. We called to Hugo, and his answering shout came back to us from far off. When he rejoined us, we learned that we had been misled by a donkey path. He told us that farther on in this direction there was another spring, and we remembered now that the Norwegian had told us of it. We thought that instead of retracing our steps and going back down to the Bay, we would continue until we found this new oasis.

But Hugo had a lot to say against this plan. Hugo had extremely

definite ideas as to where we ought to settle. He had a thousand reasons why the oasis we had just rejected would be ideal for our permanent habitation, but it needed no great shrewdness on our part to detect that his preference for that site was due entirely to the nearness of the *pampa*, that happy hunting-ground where he could shoot at will among the wild cattle. Seeing us now upon the way towards a spot which he knew very well we might find suitable, he put forth all his energy to dissuade us from going any farther. He said the spring itself was practically worthless and that it would take us at least another two hours along the rough and arduous donkey-track to reach it. It put him out extremely when we decided that as it was still so early in the day, we might quite safely venture on this further exploration. Hugo accompanied us with the worst possible grace, confiding his sentiments to the old horse. We laughed, but were merciless.

Another half hour brought us to an ancient barbed-wire fence. We found that this enclosed about an acre of land, more profusely grown with many kinds of plants than any we had seen before. The peace of noon lay upon the scene and in the stillness I suddenly heard the soft ripple of a brook. "The spring," I said, and felt my heart beat faster. Somehow I knew that we had reached the place of our long seeking. Almost before I was aware of what I was doing I had found a way through the barbed-wire fence and was on my knees beside the gushing water. Its cool transparency, and a kind of magic that seemed to lie upon the place and shimmer in the air, all seemed to speak to me in voices I had heard before, and as I dipped my hand into the water and drank a draught of it, it was as though I said to some one who had long been waiting for my coming, "Yes, it is I; I have come at last."

The rank growth round the spring, so dense and overhanging that one could hardly stand upright in it, almost hid Frederick from me. But I heard him saying to me, "This is our place, Dore, and we shall call it Friedo." I knew what the name meant, and all my heart went out in happiness to our Eden found, and to this man whose dream was my dream also, now fulfilled. For a moment, long-pent-up feeling overwhelmed me and tears of joy and thankfulness flowed down my cheeks. Frederick's strong hand held both

of mine, and he waited, full of tender understanding, for the mood to pass.

Hugo stood by, no doubt astonished at all this outburst of emotion. One place to him was much the same as another, and he told us of the settlement that had once been on this spot. Pointing out a little floor of lava blocks, he said that it was there that Watkins' other house had stood. It had been called the Casa Piedra, he said, and Watkins had murdered some one in it.

Ignoring this gruesome detail, we paused awhile to let the beauty of the scene pour into our souls. The water of the spring ran in a brook no more than a few yards long, then vanished into the parched earth. The thicket was so dense that the thought of ever thinning out and taming it seemed full of daring. We had to crawl on all fours to keep our heads clear of the lowest branches. Hugo assured us that an evil spirit had the place in charge, Watkins' ghost, he said, and advised us strongly not to stay there. Hugo's insistence on this point interested me. His fear now turned out to be quite genuine, though I had thought at first that it might have been inspired chiefly by his desire to have us settle nearer to the *pampa.* But as time went on, and as the clouds of tragedy gathered over Friedo, I often used to wonder whether we might not have been wiser to heed the little Indio's warning.

Chapter IV: DIFFICULTIES

FREDERICK NEVER TOLD ME WHETHER THE NAME OF FRIEDO, which sprang from his lips in that moment of discovery, was a premeditated one or came to him as a sudden inspiration. It was the perfect name for our home, being composed of his name and mine together, but meaning more than this, since *Friede* in the German language is the word for peace. Thus it embraced, this name, our oneness and our common dream.

In the first burst of enthusiasm, I fear I was much inclined to believe that the practical establishment of Friedo would more or less take care of itself. It did not immediately occur to me, so lost was I in the beauty of the place, that a clearing must be made, this alone an enormous work, for there were hardly ten yards of ground on which even a child could have walked upright. Frederick, no less in love with the place than I, did not allow himself to be so foolishly carried away, but immediately began a systematic plan of action. He measured out the probable extent of clearing necessary to contain even a most modest shack and essential garden round it, appraised the possibilities of the apparently rich soil, and estimated with surprising accuracy the time it would take for him and Hugo to clear a few square yards of jungle for a minimum garden plot.

The natural clearing around the brook was no more than twenty by thirty feet in size, and swampy with the underground brook immediately below the surface of the earth. Frederick looked round with a touch of dismay at the size of some of the boulders he would have to move, and there was one huge acacia tree which must also go.

The way to the spring bore traces of having been trodden hard by the hoofs of many animals. It was obviously a favorite watering place of the wild herds, and we distinguished treads of cattle, swine, asses and dogs. The dense brush hid the skeletons of many poor beasts, some shot by hunters, probably, as they came down to drink, some which had no doubt withdrawn to that pleasant oasis when they felt that their time had come and lain down to die.

Frederick said that one of his first tasks must be to put the fence in repair.

On our first night at Friedo we slept, not always comfortably, curled up amidst the gnarled and spreading roots of a ciruela tree. It was the first night we had ever spent out under the open sky, and was an unforgettable experience to me. The dazzling moonlight sent its shafts even through the dense tangled foliage, the jungle seemed afloat upon a sea of silver, and from far away the low voice of the ocean came to our ears. Strange sounds of unseen animals abroad intermittently disturbed the silence, and gradually I came to realize that the tropical night is never silent, but is alive with intense, vibrating life from sunset to sunup. The silent hours in those regions of the earth are noon and afternoon, when everything lies prostrate in the heat of the sun. At last I slept, and sometimes half-dreamed, half-thought, that the bush which sheltered us was full of creatures come to look at the intruders upon their domain.

When I awoke next morning, Hugo had already made tea, which he prepared out of some herb which tasted very refreshing though not much like the tea that Europeans know. We drank it with the juice of some of the lemons we had gathered. I sweetened mine with sugar and Frederick said, with serious reproach, "I see you haven't yet put European ways behind you." In itself this was not a very cruel remark, but somehow it mortified and hurt me deeply. It seemed to imply so much more than the mere words that, if I had not feared the action would look too childish, I should have poured the contents of my mug out on the ground and drunk no more that day.

As it was, I said nothing, but determined with all my strength that I would never again let myself forget that I had gone away from civilization to start my life anew. Fervently I told myself what deep significance lies in the trifling things of everyday, and that this new everyday must have a different character from the one that I had fled from with this man who alone, I knew, could be my guide into the country of the soul's fulfillment.

I should not record this foolish little incident were it not that it was the beginning of a violent struggle which, from that day

onward, Frederick and I were doomed to wage. The great crusader against the dominance of self in all men, he was determined, with all the ardor that was in him, to cast out the foe in me as in himself. He knew that I could never be what I most longed to become until this fight was brought to a successful issue. I, opposing where I should have yielded, did not understand, but often thought that he had ceased to love me. How mistaken I was, but how thousandfold has been his ultimate victory!

Now began the transport of our things all the way from Post Office Bay. Of all the hardships we endured in the ensuing years on Floreana, not one compared with this. It stands out in my memory with almost terrifying hideousness even now, for not only was the sheer physical labor more than my small strength could support, but the sharp inner conflict which had suddenly blazed up between Frederick and me made every burden many times as heavy and weighted my feet and heart alike with lead.

We had, as I have said before, an enormous quantity of things with us, which somehow or other must now be conveyed up a hillside innocent of roads, over rough lava fields and through dense overhanging bush. This feat had to be accomplished by two city-bred people, one of them a woman of no strength to begin with, the other a man enervated by civilized life and past his youth's first vigor. These ill-equipped beings had, for all aid, one Indio boy aged fourteen, thoroughly reckless and unreliable, and quite an aged horse. With so little physical strength available, the transport was a task for ingenuity. I thought with sad dismay that we should end by having to leave half our things behind, and Frederick, as if divining my thoughts, smiled ruefully and said, "Yes, for this job I should be twenty years younger, shouldn't I?" I was so touched at this, spoken with boyish charm, that all my depression flew away for a moment. I told him, with a confidence in which there was no pretense, that I knew very well that he would prove a match for this and every other difficulty we might encounter.

It was a thirsty and a hungry way, and meeting a bush whose branches were invitingly laden with nuts, we picked some. We saw that they contained much oil, and decided that we would later

make a press and use the oil for cooking. Hugo was horrified to see us with these nuts in our hands, and said we must on no account attempt to eat them. We, however, ignored his warning, and found that they were very pleasant to the taste. Hardly had we gone a hundred steps before I became deathly sick, and in another moment the same fate overtook poor Frederick. When we reached Post Office Bay three hours later, we were completely exhausted and undone. The effects of this rash indulgence in the poisoned fruit took days, in fact, to wear off.

But there was too much to do for us to spend the rest of the day tending our ills. We thought we should recover sooner if we ignored the qualms inside us and set at once to work to pickle the boar meat which Hugo had fetched down from the trees where we had hung it on the way up to the spring. He brought it slung across the horse's back. It was Hugo who showed us how this pickling process was done, and his pride in teaching us amused me, and greatly helped to make me forget my pains.

The rest of the day went by in sorting out the objects which should have precedence in the transport, and as we both still felt quite ill and weak, we were glad to retire to the Casa early and sleep.

The Norwegian had actually possessed a wooden transport saddle, and we sent a grateful message after him when we discovered this next day. We loaded it with pots and pans and garden implements, and the shoots of many of the plants which we had collected on the other islands. These shoots were an enormous weight, at least ten hundredweight in all; of course we did not even try to move them all at once. The kindly planters who had pressed these treasures on us had meant to prove their good will by giving us the largest cuttings they could take from their own plants. This was mistaken generosity, for very little ones would have done just as well, and saved us many a weary muscle. However, these were things we realized only afterwards, after we had become experienced and successful planters ourselves. To the birds, whose interest in our doings had in no way diminished, we must have seemed a strange group as we toiled along under our heavy loads.

I do not know which of us stumbled most painfully or most

often, we human beings or our old prisoner, the horse El Viejo. I know that as I watched him struggling bravely onward but clearly unequal to his task, I felt that he was giving me a lesson in brave endurance which I could well afford to learn from him. Hugo refused point-blank to carry anything, and neither threats nor pleading could prevail on him to do so. He left our painful caravan to its own devices, and went off muttering something about having to look for his dogs. Now and then he reappeared, unwilling perhaps to leave us entirely in the lurch and at least keeping us on the right path. But no sooner was he come than he was gone again, for every practical purpose worse than useless.

The scorching sun beat down upon us and sometimes I was literally unable to go another step. Always, when I was tired, my knees had a way of failing me. I had never been a walker to any really great extent, although in the days when I belonged to the Youth Movement I had taken part in mild walking tours such as the young people at that time went in for. But roaming along the well-kept German roads with a light rucksack on one's back, with frequent rests and never in real heat, was very different from this Calvary of Floreana, whose jagged lava floor cut leather soles like paper, and where to stumble meant to hew a deep wound in the flesh. I often called for help to Frederick. He ignored me. I pleaded with him to let me stop awhile, to let me go back altogether; he never even turned his head. I hope I may some day be pardoned for the thoughts I harbored against him then, and the cruel, bitter rebukes which I sent after him along that awful way. He seemed to me, in his ignoring of my plight, the most cold-blooded, harsh and brutal tormentor who had ever lured a woman to her slow destruction, and left her to her fate. I called him every name that I could lay my thoughts to. Only long afterwards I was to learn how every word I said had reached his heart. But he was teaching me the ways of fortitude, and knew that to yield, and let me yield, was fatal.

Utterly exhausted, I sank down now and then beneath my load, sobbing helplessly. A sense of desolation froze me to the soul. I felt that I should go mad with joy if any other living being should come into sight, even a cannibal, even a bloodthirsty buccaneer. I

thought of all the stories we had heard of former settlers and wondered if, perhaps, some as yet unknown cave upon the island might harbor some one else who might now suddenly appear and rescue me. All kinds of wild and fantastic thoughts of this kind came into my mind, only to increase the despair with which I realized that there was no one, not a living soul, to help me. The blue outline of Isabella mocked me from afar.

Heartless as Frederick's indifference seemed to be, it was already having the effect of steeling my pride. I resolved that even if I were to die I would never let him see my weakness again or call on him for any help or mercy. I will not say that I kept this vow as strictly as I meant to, but at any rate I pulled myself together and struggled on. For later trips I devised a kind of walking-stick out of planks. The unplaned wood was rough and jagged to the touch, but its support was welcome. Before we slept that night at Friedo, we planted some of the shoots which we had brought. The next day we made the journey back again. To me it was almost incredibly easy, but I thought with dread of the next transport.

In this fashion we achieved the almost superhuman task of getting our belongs to Friedo. It took many weeks and cost one life that we could ill afford to lose.

After about a fortnight, during which we had faithfully made the dreaded journey to Friedo every other day, El Viejo succumbed to the strain. I had noticed how, each time we set out for Post Office Bay, the old horse had begun to show more and more reluctance to go with us. I used to see him looking at me with his eyes full of sad pleading, as though he knew that only I could understand what he was feeling. I had come to love him dearly, and his increasing feebleness hurt me to the heart.

In spite of the abundant vegetation at the spring, there was nothing there for him to eat, so that he had to be taken to the *pampa* every day we were at Friedo. On the intervening day down below at the beach, there was enough dry grass for him to feed on. It was no short way to the grassy plain of the *pampa*, but Hugo, unwilling as he was to go on the slightest errand for us, went gladly with El Viejo. I liked to watch them setting out together, and when I saw the old horse come back, as I hoped, a little rested

and refreshed, my conscience smote me just a little less. Still I could realize, though understanding nothing about horses, that the hard labor was beyond his strength. I felt we understood each other because of the weakness that we had in common.

One day, as we were starting back for Post Office Bay with another of those hideous trips in prospect, I put my arm round El Viejo's neck and cried. He looked so infinitely sad, it seemed as though he would have cried too if nature had allowed him that relief. I could not bear to think of him stumbling along the rough way back to Friedo under the overloaded pack saddle. Suddenly it seemed to me outrageous of us to have deprived this old and hard-worked animal of his last days of rest and freedom with his brothers. I felt that I had been party to a crime, and blamed myself bitterly for having allowed him to be caught. I took off his halter and turned him loose. Frederick, striding on in front, was already well ahead, and did not see this act of rebellion. As for Hugo, he was, as usual, nowhere to be found. I kissed old Viejo and started down the slope, hoping that I had made good our base and cowardly deed. What was my dismay that night when Hugo appeared on the beach, leading the horse. He had found him roaming up towards the *pampa* and had brought him back. It was terrible to me to think that my late atonement had not been accepted. I bitterly protested against using the old horse again, but Frederick brought so many practical arguments to bear, that in the end he won, and El Viejo's last load was bound upon his back. I tried to comfort myself with the thought that perhaps he was not really overworked, and that perhaps my ignorance of horses exaggerated my alarm. But this hardly helped me, for I knew that I was only trying to deceive myself. It took him a long, long time that day to get to Friedo, and when he got there he was so exhausted that I thought he would collapse there and then. We postponed our next excursion to the Bay on his account, in order to give him two days' rest instead of one. I watched him anxiously, but could see that he was in the last extremity. We turned him loose again. I never shall forget how I went with him to the edge of Friedo, and watched him going slowly in the direction of the *pampa*. I could read his longing for it in the gentle eyes he had

turned upon me as I said good-by to him and asked him to forgive us. He never reached the plain, poor thing. It was too far. The next day Hugo came and told us he had found him lying dead where the path branched off to the caves. We saw him too next day, having to pass that way, but there was little to remind us of El Viejo. The ravenous beasts and insects of the island had fallen on his corpse and devoured it clean. Only the white bones were left. I mourned him as a friend, and wrote a little epitaph for him in my diary.

Meanwhile our Friedo had begun to assume the appearance of a human habitation. Frederick and I had done some superficial clearing of brush and of the ground, but were soon forced to realize that more drastic methods than chopping and cutting were needed here. So amazing was the fertility of the ground, that no sooner was a bush cut down than it shot up again. Besides our shoots, I had also planted some seeds, and almost before they were well in the ground they had begun to sprout, needing no watering because of the moisture from the spring just under the shallow surface of the earth.

We had as yet no house, but slept in hammocks slung between the branches of our ciruela tree. Hugo had made himself a bed of slender saplings supported on a frame and uprights, so as to keep well off the ground. When the dark fell, Hugo became strangely gregarious, and was not to be induced to let us out of sight until the safe daylight came again, when we could often look for him in vain. Though I was often angry with him in those days for leaving us so horribly in the lurch, at night I always forgave him silently, touched by his need of our protection.

With our old horse no more, our labor was heavier than ever, and Frederick, though far from robust, performed sheer miracles of strength. I remembered how he brought two wooden bedsteads with springs all the way from the Casa up to Friedo on his back, hardly pausing once to rest. The load almost bent him double, so that he could not see any obstacle ahead. I walked in front of him, telling him where to bend even lower, out of the way of overhanging branches. He spent some wasted days in an attempt to find a shorter way down to the Bay. It was not until long after-

wards that we discovered that had we had our things unloaded at Black Beach, instead of at Post Office Bay, we should have had but half an hour's walk to Friedo.

On the 1st of October luck was kind to us. Three Norwegians came over from Santa Cruz for cattle hunting. They took Hugo with them, and when they were ready to go away again, they turned over to us one of the horses they had captured on the *pampa* and used for the transporting of the carcasses. The new horse was strong and in good condition, and proved a boon to us. We were now able to move our heavy things, including the wheelbarrow Frederick had bought in Guayaquil, and some tar-paper roofing. As a result we could now begin to build our house, and lay out the garden more extensively. The Norwegians told us they were in the habit of coming to our island rather often, and promised to bring lumber and corrugated iron on their next trip, landing these things at Black Beach instead of at Post Office Bay. Captain Bruuns too had promised us a number of useful things, in fact had said that he would bring "a whole house" for us; but as I felt that he was not to be depended on, we gladly gave our order to the Norwegians.

My seeds had not been in the ground three weeks when we were eating our first crop of radishes. The almost feverish fertility of the Floreana soil had produced a radish larger than many an ordinary turnip, but it was hollow instead of solid. Both tomatoes and cucumbers were coming on with astonishing rapidity, seeming almost to shoot out of the ground. These were all grown from seeds which we had brought from home. Curiously enough some other things we put in refused to grow at all; not all our efforts ever produced either a poppy or an almond.

We were by no means dependent for our food upon our own plantation, but lived regally on oranges, lemons, aguacates, guavas and papayas from the abandoned orchard near the caves. These fruits supplemented the diet of rice and maize which we had brought with us, so that we never knew the least privation, but on the contrary had comparative luxury from the beginning. Later on, we had a fine crop of cotton from bushes planted by our predecessors, which seemed peculiarly adapted to the climatic con-

ditions of the Galapagos. Frederick disliked my doing any of the hardest labor, and delegated the gardening to me. I could not have wished for anything more pleasant, and found no day long enough for all the work I tried to do.

If we had thought that the presence of trees in the immediate neighborhood and the clearing of a piece of ground would make housebuilding easy, we were greatly mistaken. We found that there was not a single piece of straight tree trunk over a foot high on the entire island. Even the acacias were gnarled and twisted almost from the ground up, and how we were to stretch our tar-paper roofing over a ceiling of beams which curled and wound in every possible direction was a problem we were powerless to solve. Perhaps it is a little exaggerated to call the shelter we were planning a house, for it had no walls. The surrounding jungle growth formed such a wall about us that we needed no other to protect our "interior" from whatever weather came to Floreana. Our predecessors had thought differently and had built shacks such as were to be found on the other islands. The Casa Matrix was like many a European hut, but this, of course, had been necessary on account of its situation on the beach. Frederick, however, was convined that, given the natural protection of the surrounding thickets, the kind of shelter he designed was the most suitable, at least on the site that we had chosen. I agreed with him in this, and must say for myself that I loved its crazy picturesqueness and would not have had it otherwise for the world.

Our aim was to lead a life of contemplation, but we soon learned that this was something we should have to earn at the expense of arduous and protracted manual toil. Our Eden was no place of rest at the beginning, as I had thought it would be. Quite the reverse. We had to labor late and early until we could rest at all. For months, if not years, one plan led to another, so that there was never any end to all the work. Perhaps this was as well, but it was very difficult.

The new life had caused a great change in Frederick. The little tendernesses, all the spontaneous expressions of love, so trifling when enumerated and yet so indispensable, had disappeared entirely from his behavior towards me. He had become impersonal, almost

cold. He seemed impatient of even the slightest demonstrativeness on my part, and so I too suppressed my warm affectionate impulses, though not easily. Perhaps no man can be expected to understand a woman's need of those tokens of affection which come so naturally to her. It is not enough for us to be told once and for all that we are loved, and then not be reminded of it for a year or two. If this is true of women living in the midst of their own world of friends, surrounded by their children and by all the familiar things of home, how much more was it true of me, exiled not only from the world I knew but from every living being in it except this one man.

But Frederick did not move in the sphere of mundane feeling or necessity. He was unconscious of everything but that it was his task to find and lead the way to the great abstract happiness that was his goal and mine. He did not even see that I needed to be loved and treated kindly. If he had seen, his answer would have been that not until I had freed myself of even these so natural earthly chains could I expect to follow him into his world. And so I lived beside him in a solitude too bitter to be described. I had forgotten that he had ever talked of love to me, and when I tried to recall the Berlin prelude to our life it seemed that I was only dreaming it. Had the remembrance of his affection and his glowing belief in me remained vivid in my mind, it might have given me the strength I needed. But I thought of it as a short and happy time past, and saw this cold, impersonal life on Floreana stretching away into an endless future.

Chapter V: HUGO

ALMOST EVERYBODY HAS HAD ONCE IN HIS LIFETIME AT LEAST the experience of coming through a rough place in the dark, looking at it the following day and wondering how he ever could have made it. This was often my feeling, as I looked back in calmer times upon the earliest days at Friedo. And even now, with all the extenuation of time past and pain forgotten, it seems to me incredible that I actually survived the mental anguish and physical strain of that beginning. I think that I am not deceiving myself when I say that it was not the fact that the island was cut off from help that kept me from giving up. If I had sat down and refused to work, Frederick would not have let me die of starvation, that I knew. It would have been quite possible for me to go away with the next Norwegian cattle-hunters, and I had sufficient funds to pay my passage back to Europe, or even to stay on in South America, had I desired. We had brought a fair amount of money with us, part of which we had on the island, buried in the ground, and part in the safe of the German consulate at Guayaquil. Nor at that time, as I felt towards him then in the bitterness and disappointment of my early ignorance, was it my love for Frederick that kept me at his side. I have often questioned myself about this matter with all the honesty of which I am capable, and I can truly say that it was solely for the sake of my ideal purpose as I saw it that I remained on Floreana. I was so lonely in those days that nothing but a purely personal and individual reason could have held me there. Were I a different kind of person, pride or defiance might have influenced me; many a failure has been persisted in for fear of the peculiarly painful ridicule embodied in that ready phrase of family and friends, "I told you so . . ."—and very often women especially, out of a feeling of defiance, are apt to persevere in relations which have become impossible. But I have never cared what people said or thought; in fact, I am afraid that neither approval nor disapproval has had sufficient influence upon me in a general way; nor am I defiant. No—I am extremely obstinate, and what I undertake I put through, or perish in the attempt. I can make no compromises, not even to save myself, and here on

Floreana I refused to make a compromise between the situation as it was and what Floreana, as an ideal, meant to me. I decided that this was something of such infinite value and significance to my whole life that it could cost what it might, and I would pay the price.

One afternoon, staggering into Friedo in Frederick's wake, loaded with a pack of things brought up from the Bay, I suddenly could not make even the few steps more up to the house. Frederick this time showed some concern. On examining my feet, he found them so badly swollen and so painful that he gravely reproached himself for not having noticed their condition earlier. The shoes which we had brought from Europe had long been torn to pieces on the jagged lava fields. Almost every day since then, Frederick had spent some hours making us other shoes, consisting of flat wooden soles strapped to the feet with thongs of hide. These clogs, not giving to the foot, made going even harder than before, and besides, no matter how thick the wood, each trip destroyed them. The lava rock wore them down, their jagged splinters slit the wooden soles as though they had been made of calico. The lacerations on my feet were normal, but Frederick was at a loss to account for their swelling as they had.

Then Hugo, who, for a wonder, happened to be near by when wanted, sauntered over to look. We thought that poisonous thorns must have torn my feet or lodged in them, but Hugo diagnosed the trouble as being caused by the nigua, Floreana's special kind of sand-flea. He was right. This dreadful vermin of the wilderness is like the ichneumon fly, except that its host is not the caterpillar but the human animal. It is a vampire that burrows underneath the skin to lay its eggs, whereby it injects into the blood a poison causing infection and festering sores. On this one afternoon, Frederick removed no less than thirty-two of these disgusting creatures from my feet, and nothing can describe the excruciating pain I suffered at this operation. But there was nothing to be done. Other shoes were not to be obtained, and even if they had been, they would have been equally useless. An iron footwear has not yet been invented, and I believe that Floreana lava would cut through iron like cheese. If science knew of an antidote to the poison of

the sand-flea, or herbalists had ever discovered a juice that could hold them at bay, neither Frederick, Hugo, nor I knew of any such. Frederick's medical skill could give me some relief, but was of little real use, failing a means of protecting us from invasion. But he applied another treatment, one which had proved itself of value often to me, as perhaps to others. He told me that I could, if I had sufficient will, erect so strong a defense psychology around my feet that through sheer intensity of consciousness, I could be warned when any alien thing approached them. He said that even a creature of so infinitesimal size as these almost invisible sand-fleas could make its presence perceptible to a consciousness sufficiently aware of it. I confess that I received this advice with extreme scepticism, and heeded it all too little during the days immediately following the extraction of the creatures, as I limped about Friedo, excused from further trips to Post Office Bay. But when I had recovered sufficiently to do my share again, thoroughly frightened at the prospect of going through such pain a second time, I did begin to concentrate my whole mind on my feet, as Frederick had told me to do. To my amazement I was never attacked again, except perhaps once or twice by chance, and without serious results. The curious and pestiferous sand-flea, we were told, nests in feet only. Its carriers are the wild swine, whose cloven hoofs appear to be the insect's favorite lodging-place.

Hugo seemed to find an inexhaustible pleasure in cooking for us, and I was very glad to have him do so. I had no curiosity as to culinary matters, and neither asked him how he prepared his sometimes very palatable dishes, nor how he managed the fire. On Floreana I was as little of a Hausfrau as I had been in Berlin, and even the oft-praised charms of outdoor cooking failed to arouse the faintest interest in me. It might have been much better had I gone to school to Hugo for a while before we lost him.

Hugo was not always present at meal-times, nor did he always clear up after meals. One day, removing the disorder he had gaily left behind him, I came to the arrangement of stones which he had made, two fairly large piles between which he built his fire. Around this elementary hearth he had left the remnants of all the vegetables he had cooked. I knelt down to gather up this rub-

bish, putting one knee into the soft heap of ash which looked so white and cool, as though no fire ever could have burned there. When I next regained full consciousness, I found my knee burned almost to the bone. The white ash had been but a screen for red-hot coals beneath. The burn left a fearful wound which refused to heal, and made walking an unspeakable torment. But the transport had to go on. This was a major accident among many lesser ones, but there was so much to do, and, in spite of the long days, so little time to do it in, that one had not a moment to brood over small or large mishaps.

The chronicle of those weeks reads to me now like another Book of Job. One misery was hardly overcome before another, and a worse, arrived. Our vegetarian régime had created in both Frederick and me an organic antagonism towards meat, but now Frederick began to force us to become carnivorous. He said that since we were compelled not only to suffer, but also to collaborate in the slaughtering of animals, we were also morally obliged to put the prey to its fullest uses. The physical result of this no doubt high moral point of view was that we were both distressed by a general feeling of acute discomfort; painful and unsightly sores came out upon our bodies and my finger tips began to fester underneath the nails. This condition robbed us of so much energy and strength, of which our normal stock was nothing like enough for the exacting labor on the island, that I pleaded hard with Frederick to abandon logic and the ethics of slaughter for the sake of our health. But I besought in vain. In my despair, I used every sane and insane argument that I could think of. In answer to Frederick's continually reiterated theory that, having implicated ourselves in the murder of these animals, we must take the consequences and regard our eating of their meat as a just punishment, I remember saying to him once that it was not, so far as I knew, required of soldiers killing other soldiers on the battlefield to eat them afterwards. Frederick made no reply to this but merely turned his back. I begged him to forbid Hugo to shoot any more cattle whatsoever, but he refused, saying that he owed it to Captain Bruuns to let Hugo do exactly as he had done before. The boy, he said, was more Captain Bruuns' employee than ours.

Frederick's attitude towards the mysterious Captain was, and remained, a mystery to me. It was not until some time later that I found out that this bad man had given Frederick to understand that he was the sole lessee of our island, and had the right of veto or approval upon any settler; also that all the buildings, such as they were, and all the livestock, wild though it was, had been legally acquired by him under a contract with the Ecuadorean government. Thus Frederick thought that we too had become in a sense the tenants, if not the subjects, of this Captain, and that is why he felt that he was absolutely bound to do whatever Captain Bruuns demanded of him, short of actually participating in the profits of the Captain's hide and meat trade.

I think that nothing Frederick ever did made me more furious than his repairing the roof of the Casa. It incensed me to see him regard himself as the Captain's "hand." Furthermore, the work itself was not without its dangers, and Frederick was hardly less exhausted than I with the toil of getting all our things to Friedo.

Whenever I saw Hugo setting off blithely with dogs and gun for his bloodthirsty pastime on the *pampa*, it enraged me afresh to think that Frederick aided and abetted him in it, when the lad's time would have been better, more profitably and more innocently, spent in helping me to make my garden. It took every scrap of my increasing self-control not to rebel, when I was called upon to help the two cure the meat which Hugo brought home with him. It was in vain that I pointed out to Frederick that he was countenancing our being drawn into a kind of meat-packing industry against our firmest principles, but he and I, both looking at the thing from a purely ethical standpoint, started out with different premises and arrived at contrary conclusions.

The first cattle I had seen on Floreana had been a small group of eight. Unlike the fearless birds and even the horses, these turned tail at the sight of us and ran away. I was astonished at this first sight of animals' fear of men upon this island which I believed so Eden-like in this respect. The fugitives left a little brown calf behind. It started to run off with its companions, but finding it could not keep up with them, it stopped as though waiting for somebody to tell it what to do. I went up to it and put out my

hand, talking to it encouragingly, but it jumped away terrified and fled into the long grass. Frederick said it was ridiculous of me to expect the animals on Floreana to be friendly; since Captain Bruuns had commissioned Hugo to slaughter them, they had all become wary and suspicious. The longer it went on, he said, the shyer and more fierce they would become. It makes me shudder now to think how Frederick, because he felt bound by duty to the man by whose grace he believed we were allowed to live on the island, assisted him in this horrible enterprise. I blame myself no less for my own part in it, but think that I was sufficiently punished by the suffering it caused me. I thought my hands were stained with murder, as I helped clean and cure the poor things' flesh. I used to dream of it at night, and think how cruel it was that one could never make an animal understand that the harm one did it was often done unwillingly and with shame. I could not bear to meet the animals on the island any more. I felt they must have told each other what we were, and looked on us with loathing.

I was not yet familiar enough with the nature of primitive and wild folk to understand the double-sidedness of Hugo. I could not rhyme his kindness and devotion to the dogs and horses with his insatiable lust for shooting swine and cattle. The dogs adored him, and I never could forget how touchingly he had cared for El Viejo. And yet, when disaster overtook him, appalled and sorry though I was, I could not help but feel that he had received his just reward.

Hugo's skill with the old-fashioned carbine Captain Bruuns had honored him with was quite astonishing, and one day he had the opportunity to give an unexpected exhibition of it. I remember it was the 28th of October, and arriving at Post Office Bay quite early in the morning, we saw a British man-of-war anchored in the harbor. She had put in at this quiet retreat to furbish up before proceeding through the Panama Canal. Some of the officers had landed and spent the night in the Casa, and now they invited us to go on board with them. We welcomed their appearance at the moment, for our many wounds and bruises had used up all our store of lint and we were glad of this chance to get more. Several of the officers, hearing that there was good hunting on the island,

expressed a wish to make an expedition to the *pampa*, and we allowed them to take Hugo with them as guide. We Germans always somehow think of all well-bred Englishmen as trained shots and huntsmen. I was greatly astonished, therefore, to see these men return some hours later, looking bored, tired and woebegone, having nothing to show for their pains but two haunches of calf.

The officers wandered about the beach awhile, then went back to their ship, followed by Hugo's heartiest maledictions. We sympathized with him. He told us that they had each taken a few pot-shots at a herd they met upon the *pampa's* edge, but had hit nothing, not even the slowest of the cows. Not wishing to return quite empty-handed, to be laughed at by their friends, they had then given Hugo back his gun and asked him to kill something for them. This he had cheerfully done, bringing them down a good, fat calf.

Our "guests" took fairly polite leave of us, but Hugo they completely disregarded, despite all the friendly, willing service he had given them. As the last of these gentlemen was about to enter the dinghy, he turned back and took a few cigarettes out of his pocket, which he threw upon the ground at Hugo's feet without a word.

Returning to the Casa after they had gone, Hugo came storming out towards us, shouting curses and crying violently. He was beside himself with grief and fury. It was a long time before we got him calm enough to find out what the matter was. It turned out that some one had broken into his "treasure-chest" in the Casa, and had even looted some of his savings—the thief was probably a coin-collector, for the money itself could not have been the attraction. We replaced the value of the vanished wealth, and a broad grin succeeded the tears. But, nevertheless, we were grateful and relieved when these, our first visitors from far away, went back to the civilized world whence they had come, and of which we felt they were such typical examples.

One day, the *Manuel y Cobos* being due, we went down to the Bay hoping that Captain Bruuns had not forgotten to bring the things which we had ordered. We were beginning to feel the need of many of the articles, and the Norwegians' return could

not be expected for some time. The ship had not arrived, but we did not refuse Hugo's eager request to be allowed to shoot a calf in readiness for the Captain when he landed. He set out gaily with his dogs barking round him, and we followed at a rather slow pace. It was a beautiful day, and for once we had allowed ourselves a holiday from transport labors and were actually walking for sheer pleasure. Hugo's cheery voice talking to his hounds came back to us on the still air. We were near the fork in the path which branches off on one hand towards the caves and on the other towards Friedo. Suddenly we saw Hugo dart off to the left and a moment later we heard the sharp report of two shots, and a great bellowing and snorting of cattle and yapping of dogs. After this now familiar uproar we expected to be greeted as usual by Hugo's triumphant yell of the successful hunter, but it never came. Instead, an agonized scream tore the morning, and a moment later we heard the boy cry out for us.

"El toro me mata! El toro me mata!" (The bull is killing me.) Frightened out of our wits, for we possessed no kind of weapon, not even a stout stick, we dashed into the thicket in the direction of the frenzied screams. We found ourselves in a small clearing, walled in on every side by the dense jungle growth.

In the midst of this arena we saw the furious bull stamping and plunging about the narrow lava floor, trying to keep at bay the two dogs which were still attacking him with unabated savagery. We looked about for Hugo, and found him lying on the sharp lava rocks, writhing in fearful pain and screaming out that he was dying. The ground about him was splashed with his blood and the bull's. Unable to shake off the dogs, the beleaguered beast now dashed away with them in hot pursuit, and Frederick hastened to poor Hugo and made a quick examination of his injuries. He found that he had been gored through the armpit but that luckily the main blood vessels and nerves had not been severed. The boy's back was bruised, and the bull had trampled on his left foot. By a miracle, the bones were still intact. He had apparently been thrown with great violence, because a tin can in his rucksack had been pressed as flat as a pancake. From what we could gather from Hugo's broken story, his first shot had just grazed the bull, which

charged him, mad with pain; the second had only increased the trouble without hitting the poor beast fatally. There had been no time for a third. Hugo's pain now gave way to a perfect frenzy of terror lest the bull return. He pleaded piteously with us to take him away.

We looked about the enclosure, through which now not the smallest aperture was visible. It seemed incredible that Hugo and the bull and we ourselves had ever found the way through that unbroken wall of jungle; as incredible as it was that the bull had disappeared through it. Clearly the thorny branches had yielded to the pressure of the hurrying bodies and had then sprung back into a gapless wall again. But Frederck, who fortunately never went about without his knife, carefully hacked a way through the thicket.

We carried Hugo out of danger. Frederick took some fresh cartridges out of the lad's pocket and reloaded the gun. Then we went back to the clearing, thinking that the dogs, whose barking had become more distinct, had driven the bull back there. We felt that it was dangerous and inhuman not to put the animal out of the way, since it had been apparently so badly wounded. Hardly had we set foot in the place than I saw the great brute charging down upon us. I dropped, with my full weight on the knee where the recent burn was still unhealed. A huge gash opened just beneath the knee cap. Frederick knelt and fired at the bull, which was now hardly more than a yard or two away. The sheer violence of the discharge seemed to distract him and confuse his purpose, but though the bullet struck him squarely in the head, it did not kill him. He swerved, however, and rushed off into the brush with the merciless dogs after him. With merely a bit of rag tied round my leg to stanch the pouring blood, I ran the half-hour way to Friedo without stopping, terrified lest the bull might rush out at me somewhere. But Hugo's state was so bad that he could not be left, and Frederick needed medical supplies and bandages. I think I never shall know how I got to Friedo and back that time. When I returned, Frederick attended to the worst of Hugo's injuries, then left me to look after him, while he went the much longer way up to the caves, to fetch the horse which was kept tethered there

to graze. It seemed an age before he returned; then we put poor Hugo on the horse's back and brought him to Post Office Bay.

When the anesthetic fear for Hugo's life and terror for ourselves had cleared away from my brain, I became aware of the fearful pain that I was suffering from my own wound. The flesh was torn to the bone, and every time I bent my leg, I felt that I must scream with agony. Frederick insisted that he must sew this awful cut together, especially as my cuts and scratches never seemed to heal, owing to the bad condition of my blood due to the enforced change of diet. But as we had no local anesthetic nor any pain-relieving drug, I could not bear to have him perform this operation. As an alternative, he pasted a strip of adhesive plaster along either edge of the cut and sewed the two strips firmly in the middle so that they drew the skin together. My feet were muddy from plunging through the swampy ground about the spring, and so hot that I could not bear the sight or feel of them. Now, as I could not bend my leg, I was not able to wash them myself, and asked Frederick please to do so. He refused. A fury, certainly no less violent than the bull's had been, and caused I do believe by a hardly lesser pain, made me rebel as he had done. Unfortunately, though, he had been able to turn on his aggressor, I only on myself. I sharply bent my injured leg; the bandage Frederick had made so carefully and with such difficulty tore away. The blood gushed out—it was a sight sufficiently alarming. It alarmed even Frederick, but I refused his further attention.

When I think back on this incident, I see in it a milestone in my progress towards the independence of my weaker self. I had taken my stand, not without risk, for to have gained a permanently crippled leg would have been no light matter on Floreana. But I know that neither the action itself nor its significance was lost on Frederick.

The children of the wilds must have nine lives, for Hugo, as early as the next day, seemed perfectly well again, except for a bad limp. Still this was enough to keep him at the Bay while we went back to Friedo, I, this time, luxuriously on horseback.

We never saw Hugo again. When he had recovered sufficiently from the first effects of pain and shock, we told him that we

wanted him to go back with Captain Bruuns to Guayaquil, and give up cattle-hunting to learn the trade of mechanic, which was his father's wish. Chastened and subdued, he answered that he too thought this would be best. On our way back to Friedo, we again discussed the lad's departure, and I was surprised to find that Frederick had grown very fond of him. Early next morning Frederick got up and went down to the Bay to look after the patient. To his amazement, he found him vanished. Two letters lay on the table in the Casa, one from the skipper of an Ecuadorean ship which had happened to put in at the Bay. He had landed and discovered Hugo in the Casa, and the boy had asked him to take him off the island, assuring him that we, his employers, had no objection to his going. The other letter was from Hugo himself. It was full of gratitude. He thanked us again and again for having rescued him from death and for all our kindness to him. Poor boy! I learned long afterwards that his entire savings, cherished more dearly than life itself, were stolen from him aboard ship on that too hasty voyage home.

As for the bull, my conscience troubled me about him. My sense of guilt made me afraid, and I suffered an extremity of terror every time I set out alone from Friedo down the hillside to the Bay. I used to sing as loudly as I could all the way along in the hope that this would frighten off any animals who might otherwise be inclined to emerge from the surrounding thickets. Floreana is a large island, and the *pampa* is some distance from both Friedo and the caves, but fate meant that I should meet that bull again. I was going back to Friedo from the caves alone. He was standing in the middle of the narrow donkey path; I did not see him until I was quite near. In the first shock of recognition my impulse was to turn tail and run. On second thought, however, I rejected this idea, for his four sound legs would too easily have overtaken a two-legged fugitive, lame at that, and moreover I was really much too terrified to move. I waited as in a bad dream, passively, to see his head go down to charge at me and toss me on his cruel horns. But he did nothing of the kind. He stood regarding me with something like indifference, and certainly with no hostile intent. And I realized suddenly that, since I had done him no harm he probably

bore me no resentment. I decided to continue on my way, though not without a qualm of fear at the thought that the narrowness of the path would force me almost to brush him as I went by. I skirted him with circumspection, and when I had passed him I turned and looked back. I saw him looking after me, then he too turned away and trotted off. I still remember how relieved and happy this encounter made me. I looked on it as a reconciliation, and hoped that now that Hugo was away all the creatures on the island would soon forget that they had ever been molested, and re-make their peace with man.

One day when Frederick was working at the fence, a young bull made its appearance. Startled, he retreated into the bush, but finding that the man did not pursue him, he came back. Frederick threw him some acacia fruit. This is not an attractive morsel, but animals enjoy it. After this first meeting, the young bull turned up every afternoon for two months. Then, the rains being too long overdue, a bad drought began to set in, so he stayed up in the *pampa*, and we only saw him now and then when we went out that way. The next year, however, in the rainy season, he came again to visit us, bringing his family with him, a young cow and her brand-new son. He became one of our good friends, and whenever we called him when he was with the herd, he would stand quite still or come across to us. Not only he, but many other animal friends of ours disappeared strangely after the arrival of the Baroness Wagner-Bousquet. She wrought more havoc than ever Hugo had done, wounding a horde of creatures and killing many. It may be that our young bull was slaughtered by her or at her order, or it may be that she destroyed the trust that he had in all men, and made him think that we, too, were an enemy to be avoided.

Hugo's dogs were a pitiful legacy. They missed him terribly, as dogs do miss a good master, roaming disconsolately about, looking for him everywhere. They came to us as if to ask where he had gone, and we could not mistake their eagerness, perhaps their need, to be taken out hunting now and then. But this we absolutely ignored. At first we fed them with the meat that we had dried, but soon they lost their appetite for this, or possibly it disagreed with them. It may also very well have been that they missed

Hugo so much that they refused food out of grief. At any rate, they became more gaunt and wretched week by week, and at last we saw that we must do away with them. It hurt us terribly to do this, but we realized that to let them live on would be a still worse cruelty. So it was done, and I believe that we did right.

But if we thought that we had expiated Hugo's ill deeds, we were much mistaken. Wild dogs now found their way to Friedo. They came and lurked about the edge of our plantation, venturing gradually nearer as they saw that we did not drive them off. They were sinister, emaciated creatures with wolfish and despairing eyes. They looked the very embodiment of Hugo's own bad conscience. Evidently these poor creatures had sustained life upon the carcasses of Hugo's kill, for we knew that he shot a great deal more than ever he brought back to Friedo. Now there was nothing for these dogs to live on, and there were nine of them. We saw that it would be hopeless for us to try to keep them alive, for we meant to have no more slaughtering while we were there. Again destruction seemed the only kind solution, and so they were destroyed. I felt that Hugo had been exorcised.

Chapter VI: MARAUDERS

AT LAST WE WERE ALONE. I OFTEN FOUND MYSELF MISSING the wild lad Hugo, although I had been glad he went away. In these weeks of struggle with myself I began to learn more understanding for the strangeness of Frederick's attitude. I think I never, day or night, ceased to study him with a sort of desperate concentration, and gradually this labor of the heart and mind brought its reward. I used to watch him unobserved, and saw how unremittingly he worked, and with what thoroughness, as though each thing he did, no matter how trifling and even menial, was a complete expression of himself, and must be done as perfectly as he was capable of doing. He said so little, and yet in everything he said I came to understand that feeling for the great connection between the fragment and the whole, the reflection of the whole in all its fragments, even the least, which was the core of his conception of the universe. Little by little I realized that the words he had so often spoken when we talked about this dream of flight together were not being translated by him into the active terms of life. It was as though, in this intensive realization of that dream he had ceased to see himself as a man any longer, but had become an instrument, a mirror, the impersonal embodiment of a philosophy. How then should I demur if, seeing in me, as I knew he did, the necessary complement of himself, he ceased to see in me the individual, the woman in the ordinary sense? It seemed, until I taught myself to realize all this, as though he had forgotten me, consigned me to an intolerable loneliness at his side. But as his vision became more clear to me through his example, I saw that in that wider sphere, in which alone this great man could freely move, there could be no such thing as loneliness, for each must be complete within himself, and companionship is only perfect when it is not dependent.

Frederick's often Herculean achievements roused my ambition to do likewise, and at first it made me horribly unhappy to find that I could not make any impression on the dense thickets with my knife, as Frederick did with his. My weakness angered me. Frederick disliked to see me even attempting to do heavy work, but

never tried to hinder me, nor, when I failed, did he ever make the usual comments. In everything, he let me teach myself; that was his system of education for the human being. But work that was within my scope he expected me to do well.

I had flung myself with rapture into the plan to live my life in the midst of nature, but when I found myself faced with the actual task of doing so I had to see that I was ill-adapted to it. As a child I had had an overwhelming awareness of all natural things—I think I have told about this already—but in the intervening years that awareness had become dulled. On Floreana everything seemed new and strange, and even terrifying. I had thought that there I would have the feeling that I had reached a long-lost home, and indeed this was what I had felt at my discovery of the spring. But in a thousand ways I found that if this were the home that I had lost, I had grown alien to it in my long absence in the world of strangers. But gradually my childhood's affinity with natural things came back, intensified now, and slowly I regained my lost paradise.

The living things I raised became a part of me: my plants, my chickens, and all the other objects of my care. And every rock and stick and stone of Friedo was beginning to take on that so consoling look of deep familiarity which is the face of home. I sometimes feared lest my preoccupation with these things was taking up too much of my attention—however dear to me, they were nevertheless mere material aspects of the universe from which I had come away in order that I might learn to grasp it spiritually. Especially my chickens absorbed me. I could stand watching them for hours, touched and amused by all their different ways, and infinitely interested watching the play of one's individual character. Frederick would often remind me of my neglected duties, and tell me sternly that I was leaving essential things undone. "Come, Dore," he would say, "you're forgetting you have work to do."

It was the same with the birds: I never tired of observing these friendly little souls, and knew them so well that I believe I even understood their language. Sometimes, in spite of Frederick's admonitions, I could not tear myself away from them, so that by sundown the completion of more than one neglected piece of work had to be left till the next day. Since each day, at this time of

settling in, brought its own work, almost always more than could be done while daylight lasted, procrastination was a serious offense. Then my shortcomings would plague my mind at night, and I would promise myself contritely to improve. Conscience-stricken at the time I had wasted, I would draw up a schedule for the next day's work, and then for a long time would follow it religiously. Frederick never scolded me, and I knew that he would not be pleased with the details of my repentance and atonement, but I determined that he should see me growing in his likeness as time went on.

My chicken-coop and its inhabitants were my chief pride on Friedo at that time. It used to amuse me there, so far away from civilization with which the chicken-coop is inseparably associated, to see mine flourishing so beautifully in the wilderness. Our predecessor at the Casa had sold us wire netting and Frederick had planted four uprights about his own height, a very difficult performance in the shallow, rocky ground of Friedo. He had been wise enough to stretch a roof over this coop, thinking the Galapagos chickens might be more active with their wings than their European cousins. The first occupants made an astonishing and impressive resistance when we had got them into their house. I had never really looked on hens as birds, and when I saw these using their wings to perform bold aerial feats, I was charmed and surprised.

The fowls were also, as I have said, a legacy from the Norwegians. Hugo had spent exciting hours in attempts, usually unsuccessful, to catch them. They were incredibly wary, and Hugo's all-too-simple snare, composed of a looped string intended to be pulled tight round the foot of any bird that stepped within its circle, seldom caught anything. These poor birds were so famished, however, that the mere sight of a human being brought them in cackling hordes around one. Even a pan of rainwater set down upon the ground would bring them all. But they had no intention of allowing anyone to lay a hand upon them. Frederick, observing our futile attempts, then came along and set a more effective trap. He found an iron hoop which had once formed part of a fishing net, and curved a dome of wire netting over it, so that it looked

like a large cheese-ball. Underneath this contraption he placed a can of water to attract the game, and hitched up the front of the cage invitingly, supporting its edge upon a forked twig to which a long string was attached. He then went out of sight behind the Casa door and waited. The new edifice was curiously examined by the prospective booty, which regarded it, however, with suspicion. At last the rooster, very properly taking the lead, ventured in with a reckless air, followed admiringly, if somewhat cautiously, by six wives. The string was pulled, the trap closed. They were ours. We put them, noisily protesting, into a wooden case and nailed wire netting over the top, through which I gave them a good meal. At Friedo, when they had calmed down after their first fear of the enclosed space in which they found themselves, they seemed quite happy, and with true bourgeois adaptability immediately grew reconciled to imprisonment when they discovered that there would always be enough to eat. I gave them all names, to which in time each one learned to answer. I have an entry in my diary for the 1st of December which reminds me that Erna gave me our first egg.

Meanwhile our house had undergone considerable improvement. The Norwegians, as good as their word, had returned and deposited three dozen sheets of corrugated iron on Black Beach for us. The transporting of this load from Post Office Bay would have been a most dismaying task, but from Black Beach it was easy. Now, roofed with iron and floored with wood, our house began to assume an air of permanence, and with the good-sized chicken-coop behind it, it gave us sometimes the impression that we had been settlers on Floreana all our lives.

Our stores had also been supplemented. The ship on which Hugo had gone away that morning had brought stores for us, though the skipper had not found it necessary to wait until we came down to the beach to receive and check them personally. His letter told us that Captain Bruuns had been unable to come himself because the *Cobos* was once more laid up for repairs in Guayaquil. That ancient craft had almost got beyond the age of service.

We heard a story afterwards which confirmed my impression of Captain Bruuns. He had bought for us the supplies in question,

and had gone to the German consul with the bill, asking him to pay it out of the funds we had deposited. The bill was for 250 marks plus 50 more for freight charges. This seemed to the consul a very large amount indeed, and he was most unwilling to pay it without first consulting us, but Captain Bruuns was very urgent, saying that unless we received these stores at once, he would not answer for the consequences, as we were already near starvation. When Frederick heard of this, he was furious, for the price demanded was out of all proportion to the actual cost of the supplies, and the Captain's method at the consulate enraged him too. I tried to make him see that this was an illustration of the sort of man the Captain was, but even this did not suffice, apparently, to convince Frederick. He still found excuses for the man, though I rebuked him severely for his gullibility. But he said, "Dore, these people are nothing to us. They are inhabitants of another world. They are weak and cowardly and dishonest, made so by the conditions of a life they have not the courage to free themselves from. So long as they remain bound by those chains, we must have understanding for their weaknesses. It is the chains that we must show them how to throw off, partly by precept and partly by example. But as for us, we are not on their level. We have gained the better world, or at least we are well on the way to it. That is why we must have no pity for our own weaknesses, and find no excuses for them. In leaving civilization, we left behind us our excuse."

"Don't you believe in charity towards shortcomings," I asked him, "I mean for us?"

"No," Frederick answered, "for us there is only discipline. We must conquer by will."

"And by brutality, it seems," I said. Frederick, knowing what I meant, but ignoring the challenge, said quietly, "With brutality too, if it must be.

"You never see the animal in man, Dore," he went on, "and yet, there lies the root of every evil. It is the animal in us that torments us, and drives us from the path. That is the evil spirit which we must drive out, and it is all the more difficult to overcome because it appears so often in a charming mask. You think that the outward

forms of kindness and humanity—your love of animals, for instance —are good and admirable. Nothing could be more mistaken. Your affection for all these wild creatures here, and for your plants and chickens, is no more or less than a flattering and cherishing of the animal in yourself."

I was not far enough along the way to wisdom to understand what Frederick meant. I only knew that I could not yet breathe the rarefied air of his high intellectual sphere. If anything, finding myself more and more alone on the material plane, where simple affection for creature life and simple joy in nature's gifts were still my happiness, I went on tending my animals and garden, lavishing on them all the care and attention I could give. And their response, at least, was simple and spontaneous, and helped me over many a hard time.

One day towards the end of November, as we went down to Post Office Bay, where there was still a great deal left to be conveyed to Friedo, we saw a handsome yacht riding at anchor in the harbor. We saw her name, *Mary Pinchot*, painted on her stern. This was not the first time I had seen that name—it had been carved into the trunk of the big ciruela tree on Friedo and I had woven many a romantic story round it. I wondered whether she had been the love of one of the Norwegian settlers and thought the name was French; it suggested to me a beautiful pair like Paul and Virginia, who had come, like us, to live away from crowded places. Sometimes I thought of Mary Pinchot as the sweetheart of some poor shipwrecked man who, wandering desperately on the island's barrenness, had come upon our beautiful oasis and had perhaps been charmed and comforted by it as I had been. I imagined him carving the beloved name into the great ciruela tree, and often wondered whether this interpretation was the true one, and whether he had ever got away and gone back home to Mary Pinchot. It was disappointing now to find she was a yacht, and not a girl at all.

We found some of the crew on the beach. One of them asked about the Norwegian and seemed dejected to hear that he was gone. It turned out that they had often met before, and were quite good friends. Somehow it seemed odd to me that people

from so far away as the civilized world should be friends of long standing with anybody on this island. The owner of the yacht had not come this trip, we were told, and the skipper had stayed for a few days at Isabella, where he was visiting the padrone. They had taken him over in the dinghy and would fetch him again in a day or two. These men all showed the greatest interest in us, and were amazed to hear what feats of transporting we had accomplished. One of them made the kindly and practical suggestion that we load the worst of the remaining things onto the dinghy and take them round to Black Beach, which was much nearer to Friedo. I was infinitely relieved and grateful, and so was Frederick, though at first he protested that we were giving these strangers too much trouble. We had so much to pack that we spent hours getting everything together. Some of the dried meat which had been destined for Captain Bruuns we now decided to take back for the chickens. We packed crockery and glasses from the Casa into the wooden cases the Norwegian had left lying about. Captain Bruuns had said the things belonged to him, but offered to sell them if we wanted them. I personally doubted whether they were the captain's, or the Norwegian's either.

Meanwhile the skipper of the *Mary Pinchot* returned, and pressed a package of food upon us. We accepted it, of course, though not without some embarrassment, for it was partly our principle and partly, I admit, our vanity, to take care of ourselves without any outside help. Punctual to the minute, the motorboat arrived and took our freight on board. It was a short but delightful trip. From the water I could follow the line of the path over which Frederick and I had toiled so often. One of the crew was a young Norwegian named Nelson, who asked us to let him spend a day with us at Friedo. He seemed fascinated by the whole idea of our idyllic settlement. The mate of the *Mary Pinchot* said we ought to have a boat of some kind for our own use, and not be wholly dependent on visitors to take us round the island. We made the usual answer that one makes to such impractical suggestions, but could hardly contain our astonishment when two days later we saw on the beach at Post Office Bay a trim little rowing boat, fully equipped with oars and life-belts, and a letter telling us

it was for us, and wishing us luck. The *Mary Pinchot* had sailed, so I never knew whether our thanks ever reached these generous friends.

Nelson had told us that the Galapagos Islands were often visited by American yachts. We thought it very curious that wealthy pleasure-seekers should show such preference for so primitive a region of the world as this, but after the visit of the *Mary Pinchot* we knew that we should have to expect the sight of strangers often on Post Office beach, or wandering about the nearer reaches of our island. We hoped they would not penetrate so far as Friedo. Beyond this, we gave the threatened visitors no thought, and indeed there was so much to do at this time that we hardly had a thought for anything but ground-clearing and transport.

It would be quite impossible to give an adequate picture of the difficulties of clearing away that jungle with the implements at our disposal. We started work soon after dawn and not until night, when it was too dark to see any longer, did we stop, completely exhausted. The next morning, as we started to attack the thickets again, it often seemed not only as though we had made no impression whatever upon them in all the days before, but that they had grown more dense and unassailable than ever overnight. One could have walked across the acacias, so hopelessly intertwined and plaited were their branches. For this reason, little was achieved by severing a trunk from the base, for the tree could not fall. The liana vines were like cords of iron, almost impervious to the ax. The only effective method with the trees was to chop them down from the top, standing on the precarious floor provided by the tangled crest of one, to chop its neighbor free. Eventually Frederick would get one down.

It was my work to clear the undergrowth round the trees where Frederick was working. One day I heard an unusually violent crash and then a cry for help. The blood froze in my veins. For a moment I could not move. I was sure that Frederick had been killed by a falling trunk or else had got entwined in the treacherous lianas, and was perhaps strangling to death in their toils. After what seemed an hour of frozen fear I found that I could move again. I shouted to him that I was coming, and listened in fearful

anguish for his answer. I did not dare to wait for it, nor could I hear it because of the noise of the crackling branches as I forced my way through to where his voice had come from.

At last I came to the place, but before I could reach him I had to climb over and through the matted branches of the tree that he had felled. Frederick was lying on the ground with his right arm caught in a wedge formed by the stump of the fallen tree and one of its powerful branches. His face was distorted with pain. He could hardly move. In a faint voice he told me to bring a crowbar which lay near and try to lift the branch off his arm. I brought the iron bar, but my strength was hardly equal to the strain of using it. I was awkward and slow, and the more clumsy for my alarm. I could not bear to see the pain that Frederick was silently suffering, and all the time I labored I wondered what I should do if his arm or back were really broken. Only an hour before, we had been saying how glad we were that the *Mary Pinchot* had gone off and left us to ourselves again, but now I would have given all I had to know that she was still lying in the bay. At last I raised the branch sufficiently for Frederick to remove his injured arm by slow and painful degrees. By a miracle it was not broken, though badly crushed and bleeding. He had been struck on the head too, and was still dazed. For a whole fortnight he was unable to use his arm.

This fortnight was like a little holiday, and I think we both enjoyed it. It was now the middle of January. We had been on Floreana almost half a year. Frederick profited by the helplessness of his right hand to learn to use his left, and wrote a long letter home in order to practice his new talent. One morning early we went down to Post Office Bay. We meant to take back a few light stores with us, and went over to the Casa to fetch them. We still had a good deal there, and some of our most valuable and necessary foodstuffs, for it was a good storehouse, safe from the inroads of the weather. We had also cleared it more or less of ants and other insect pests, which we had by no means eliminated yet at Friedo. As we approached the house across the beach, we were surprised to notice remnants of boxes and crates, tins and litter, strewn about outside it. As we came nearer, we saw that these

were our crates and that they were empty. We now ran, fearing the worst, and found, on reaching the hut, that it had been completely cleared of all our stores. Everything was gone, both our belongings and Captain Bruuns'. Even the rusty iron dynamo and other equipment had been dismantled and carried away. And almost worst of all, our charming little boat was gone. The damp sand was full of donkey tracks going in several directions. They seemed to lead away into the brush, and we decided that it was very possible that robbers had come and taken possession of the island. We were a thousand times grateful to the kind Americans of the *Mary Pinchot*, who had taken many of our stores to Black Beach, and hoped the robbers had not been there too. Frederick now sat down outside the Casa and wrote a long letter to Captain Bruuns, telling him what had happened and suggesting the presence on the island of a marauding band. Or perhaps pirates, such as abound in Chinese waters, had been at work here and had now sailed away again. It looked as though the Captain's losses were greater than our own, though we could certainly afford to lose our things less than he his. I dare say that in the consternation of the moment this letter became a most alarming document. If, when we heard about it afterwards, it seemed to us rather melodramatic, it was certainly not so when we wrote it, for we were genuinely frightened. We possessed no kind of weapon since Hugo had taken his gun away with him. It had never occurred to us that this might be necessary, for the thought of our ever being in actual danger on the island was far from our minds. We realized now that we were in a perhaps fatal plight, and saw how foolhardy we had been in providing for every eventuality except the most likely one of all—that of man's ill-will towards man. For the first time, we went back to Friedo empty-handed. The sun was shining just as brightly as when we had come, but now the day was gloomy in the shadow of a sadder disappointment than that of merely losing our supplies. I think we hardly spoke a word all the way back.

Chapter VII: MIZPAH

SOMETHING ON FLOREANA HAD CHANGED. THERE WAS A MENace in the air, something sinister and frightening, the more so because there was no outward sign of anything amiss. We were convinced that the despoilers of the Casa were somewhere on the island, lying in hiding for the time being, but ready to continue their depredations, and attack us when they felt so inclined. Had we been armed, I think we should have gone in search of them, if only to relieve the strain of waiting, but, conscious of our utter helplessness, we could only wait for them to betray their presence. Sometimes we used to listen for tell-tale shots among the wild cattle, thinking that the unseen robbers would soon go slaughtering, as Hugo had done, but we waited in vain. There was no sign of any human beings other than ourselves on Floreana, and yet the island, some nine miles long and eight miles wide, had not yet been entirely explored by us, and might well contain many a hiding-place that we knew nothing of. We knew that there were many dark, mysterious places on it that we had often meant to take a nearer look at, and the lava bed was full of clefts and crevices, forming what looked like subterranean caves into which I had thought it would be interesting to penetrate. I thought of all these now, imagining that enemies were inhabiting them. I remembered the Norwegian's having told us of one such cavern underground, only a few hundred yards behind the Casa. Frederick had even ventured a good way into this gloomy recess, whose farthest depths formed a crypt for the remains of the giant turtles which used to come up into it through a secret ocean channel. Generations of wild dogs had frightened the turtles off the island, so that they no longer landed, to come up as they had done through ages past, over the land to the fresh-water springs. This cave I had always thought of as one of the eeriest of the many eerie places on the island, and now I imagined it harboring the new enemy. I did not like to go out any more for fear of meeting the robbers, and kept as close to Friedo as necessity allowed. However, it was not to be avoided that we went down daily to Black Beach in the hope that Captain Bruuns had come at last.

But day after day passed without a sign of him, and a new depression settled down upon us. Try as we would, we could not throw it off. It was as though all our subconscious feeling about this island which had vanquished our predecessors now rose to the surface of our minds and gave us the unalterable conviction that we, like they, were intruders and would not be tolerated. We felt that unseen creatures, not the human robbers but the guardian spirits of the island, had begun to watch us. Sometimes a strange vibration in the atmosphere seemed to tell us that they were in communication with each other, round about us, invisible but ever-present. This feeling was worse in the silent day than at night, when the island was loud with voices and the tramplings of animals. Frederick and I could no longer bear to have each other out of sight. Even when we worked quite close together but hidden from each other by the thickets, we would call across for reassurance. I no longer went down to the beach alone as I had done so often before, and sometimes when Frederick went away, I suffered tortures of anxiety until he returned. So intense became my conviction that the spirits of the island had begun to resent us, that I began almost to forget the robbers, and if at that time I had been asked, I think I should have said I wished that they were there. The continued absence of Captain Bruuns began to seem more and more unnatural, and for the first and last time I found myself wishing from the bottom of my heart that we had not exposed ourselves to the resentment of strange gods.

Once more Frederick and I made our futile daily pilgrimage to Black Beach and back. We scanned the sea for a ship, but not even on the farthest horizon was there any sign of one. Isabella, mockingly near and desperately far, rose blue against the empty sky some sixty miles away, and the empty sea looked as though it would never bring us rescue from our plight. It was January the 17th, and we had waited many a long day for the belated *Manuel y Cobos*. We returned to Friedo disconsolate, more than ever filled with vague alarm. We made our evening meal, I fed my chickens and we prepared to wait with what patience we might, hoping against hope that the next day would bring the missing Captain.

Suddenly a strange sound struck our ears. It was a low booming

like a cannon, and yet we knew this could not be. The warships which had put in at the Bay never gave any signals, for there was no one on the island to hear them so far as they knew. The low roar was uncanny at that moment and in those surroundings, and at first neither of us was inclined to go and see what was the matter. But after a while the sound came again. I said to Frederick, "It's an eruption," and sprang to my feet. Although it was only seven o'clock, it was already dark. We groped our way along the path, stumbling often. We did not think that one of our nearest volcanoes had awakened—the sound was too far off for that—so we had no fear of being greeted with a shower of molten lava. All at once a flash of light soared up into the air, followed by another boom. To our amazement we saw that both came from the sea in the direction of Post Office Bay. If these flares and gunshots were signals for us, we knew that they could not be from Captain Bruuns. But even if they were, there was nothing to be done till daylight. Frederick assured me that it would be madness for us to obey my impulse and try to reach Post Office Bay in the pitch dark, and I reluctantly agreed that he was right. There was no moon, and we should have had to take our ancient kerosene lantern to light our way, a perfectly foolhardy proceeding. We should most likely not have been able to get across the smallest of lava fields. While I was disappointed, I was at the same time relieved and grateful. I knew that help had come at last, and could hardly sleep all night for sheer excitement.

Dawn had hardly touched the sky the next morning before Frederick and I were on our way. We were so buoyed up that almost for the first time the path seemed easy going. We were halfway along, when to our great surprise we heard voices. They seemed to be approaching us. We stood still, waiting for their owners to emerge out of the thicket, and sure enough, a party of strangers was coming towards us. They were members of an American yachting party, and told us they had anchored the evening before in Post Office Bay.

We asked them whether another boat was there too, describing the *Manuel y Cobos* and saying how long we had waited for its arrival. To our astonishment these men seemed perfectly familiar

with our situation. They said that they could well imagine our eagerness for Captain Bruuns' arrival, but that he had not yet turned up. They, however, had been greatly alarmed for us and had set out that morning with the purpose of finding us, alive or dead. It turned out that they had landed on Post Office beach, and found our letter in the barrel. It had been read by the yacht's first officer, who knew German, and had greatly agitated everyone on board. They had realized that they could do nothing until the morning, as no answering sign had come to all their signals, and they had even thought they might have come too late to be of any help. The owner of the yacht had sent us an invitation to come on board, and this we accepted with much gratitude. As for me, an unspeakable load had fallen from my heart in the few moments' conversation with these kind men. This touch of human friendliness and sympathy dispelled the evil magic which had held us in its thrall. The search party turned back with us, and on the way we learned that one of these gentlemen was Baker Brownell of Northwestern University. To Frederick's great joy, here was some one who could meet him on his own ground of philosophy, and as Mr. Brownell spoke German well and fluently, the two at once engaged in an animated discussion of Frederick's favorite themes. Meanwhile I talked with the others, answering their astonished questions in broken English with what seemed to them amazing answers. I had never thought the long and arduous way to Post Office Bay could be so easy and so short.

When we got down to the shore, we found two yachts at anchor, one pitch black, the other snowy white. We learned that we were bound for the white one, a beautiful craft with the name *Mizpah* painted on her stern. We were introduced to her owner, Commander Eugene F. McDonald, who greeted us charmingly and told us again how our letter had alarmed them all. He was kindness itself, and we were almost embarrassed to think how melodramatic our missive must have been, though we did not think so when we had written it. The *Mizpah* left that night and we never saw Commander McDonald again. Almost all the other yachtsmen who came down to Galapagos once returned, so that we renewed our acquaintance with them from time to time.

I do not know whether it was because Commander McDonald happened to arrive just at the moment of our direct need, so that he seemed to me, at least, to have been sent direct from Heaven, but he left an unforgettable memory behind him. His kindness was so tactful and he showed such sincere interest for the human side of our experiment, that although we only knew him for an hour or so, we thought of him as a real friend. As time went on we came to have a considerable correspondence with the outside world, but there were no letters that we received with greater pleasure or looked forward to more eagerly than those from Commander McDonald.

Only those who believe in blind chance and accident could think that our encounter with Commander Macdonald was fortuitous. I know that this was not so, but that a rôle in our strange story had been allotted to him as definitely and as clearly as to ourselves. For other visitors had come and gone without consequences of our meeting, but through this meeting with Commander McDonald we were to become known to the world. The secret of Friedo was given to the world through him, and in that moment our drama reached a turning-point, perhaps through his unconscious participation in it.

We spent the whole afternoon aboard the *Mizpah*, enjoying the generous hospitality of our host. When we told him of our fear of the robbers we thought were still concealed on Floreana, he showed us his own rapid-fire rifle. It looked to me so terribly efficient an instrument of destruction that I said I now could easily believe that he came from Chicago, where such things, so we had heard, were put to daily use by ordinary citizens. Commander McDonald listened with great interest to the description of our fight against the jungle, and when Frederick said it would have saved us literally months of labor if we had only been able to blast the ground clear, the Commander said that he could give us all the dynamite we needed, as well as implements which would greatly lighten our toil. He told us that he had just come down from treasure-hunting on the Cocos Island, for which purpose he had put a supply of explosives on board. Unfortunately the party had had no luck in their romantic search, but certainly the luck was

ours in inheriting their surplus storage of dynamite. Commander McDonald also gave us a gun, not such a terrifying one as his, but still sufficient for our needs.

Later in the afternoon the owner of the black yacht, with his wife and several of their party, came over to the *Mizpah* for a visit. This was Mr. Julius Fleischman. He confirmed what we had heard before, that the Galapagos Islands were a favorite cruising-place for American yachtsmen.

That day was a day of real deliverance and happiness. We were almost ashamed to leave the hospitable *Mizpah* with all the things Commander McDonald had insisted upon our taking with us—picks and shovel, all kinds of tools, the fine shotgun, soap (which was my most essential need), and any quantity of food-stuffs. As we were about to leave, the black yacht sent out a motor-boat with a further lavish supply of things for us, and when Frederick and I landed on the beach with all these gifts we felt like the children in the old fairy tale who had a dream of Christmas and woke up to find it all come true.

The first officer came over with us to show us how to discharge the dynamite with the electrical apparatus we had been given. He demonstrated the working of the machine by setting off a small charge on Black Beach, where we had been landed. It went off with a deafening report that echoed and re-echoed among the near volcanoes. I wondered if the herds upon the *pampa* had heard it and been terrified.

In the excitement and delight of being "rescued," I had quite forgotten the extraordinary and savage appearance Frederick and I must have presented. It was not until we were back at Friedo that I thought how incongruous and awful we must have looked aboard that charming yacht, the exquisite appointments of which demanded occupants and even visitors dressed in the extreme of elegance and fashion. I looked at Frederick with his unkempt mane of hair and beard that suggested nothing so much as the jungle thickets, his torn and work-stained shirt and trousers, and felt that really he had done his host small honor in his get-up. As for me, I blushed to think what I looked like in my old striped cotton dress the last of my Floreana trousseau, my hair bleached by the sun, and my

face so sunburnt that it looked as though I had stained it with walnut-oil; and worst of all, my hands, all cut to pieces and rough with primitive toil, no longer like a woman's hands at all. If Commander McDonald's generosity and his guests' friendliness towards us had delighted me before, now I was touched to remember that they had not made us feel by a word or a glance how out of place and eccentric we must have looked to them. The ladies especially had been charming.

A few days later the black yacht returned, and Frederick and I were invited on board. For this occasion we tried to make ourselves a little more respectable, though I am afraid with indifferent success. Once more I found the ladies full of kindness towards me, and as one of them spoke excellent German our talk was not limited to the few remarks that I could manage with my poor English. We in Europe are given a very false impression of the American women of the wealthier classes. They are described to us as superficial, blasé, sensation-hunting persons, without a serious interest or a worth-while thought in all their lives. I can only say that the ladies of this one yachting party, and others we were later to make the acquaintance of, gave the straight lie to such reports. I found them, on the contrary, at least as much concerned with the serious things of life as German women, at least as fond of their children and anxious for their welfare as every other mother in the world. Seeing in me a woman who was making a perhaps extreme attempt to solve a certain problem of life which affects all women, they talked to me more intimately than they would have done had we met in any other way, and I found them deeply concerned with basic problems such as freedom and adjustment of the inward to the outward life—far more concerned than European women I had known.

In addition, they were so natural and spontaneous, and so full of understanding, tact, and the kindliest attentiveness, that I have always cherished my remembrance of them all. Perhaps it was a momentary concession to the world that we had left that made me tell these people, when they asked, that Frederick and I were married. I hope that if any of them should by chance read this book they will forgive me for that small conventional deception.

Commander McDonald was putting back to Guayaquil and promised to let Captain Bruuns hear of the plundering of the Casa. He also had the kindness to take along a list of things we most required. He may have begun to suspect that Captain Bruuns was not the most reliable of friends, for instead of leaving the Captain to bring us what we needed, he said that he himself would send the articles to us.

The Commander's gifts to us had been so lavish and so many that we were now no longer forced to raise the food for our immediate daily needs, but were free to give our whole time to the planning and planting of our real garden. We spent hours and days exchanging suggestions and ideas, for Friedo was far more to us than a mere plantation. It was to be the outward and visible symbol of our whole scheme of life. We could never have enough of talking about it.

On board the *Mizpah*, Frederick and Professor Brownell had continued the exchange of philosophies which they had begun at first sight. And in the end Mr. Brownell had said, "Yes, the solitude that is necessary for every great research into ultimate things needs courage to endure, and that is why so few have ever made the attempt. . . ." Now, planning Friedo so intensively, and with such confidence, I was often reminded of the almost mystical light that had come into Frederick's eyes as he had answered: "That may be true for others, but as for me, I think that I shall go on to the end on Floreana. I know that I shall find here what I came to find, and this is where I hope to die." I remember the respectful silence that had followed these words. It was I who interrupted it, saying, "Oh, Frederick, don't let us talk of dying on our island; we've hardly begun to live there yet." This had restored the mood of pleasantness and everyone had laughed. Death seemed a long way off from both of us.

Chapter VIII: MANY ANNOYANCES

NOTHING WAS GOING TO BE MADE EASY FOR US ON Floreana, and now a time began which, happy though it was, and undisturbed by greater enemies, was one long succession of petty wars against conditions on the island.

The dynamite Commander McDonald had given us did not prove to be the help it promised. So tough were the jungle trees that sometimes a simultaneous charge of twelve cartridges failed to bring them down. I remember one of them whose trunk withstood a dynamite attack without a splinter to show for it afterwards. Later, however, we made the useful discovery, the result of much trial and error, that small quantities of explosive, when ignited, burned with a heat of more than ordinary intensity. And so we hit on the idea of clearing out the bush by burning. In our ignorance, we reasoned that this vegetation would burn easily because it was absolutely parched. But the wilderness laughs at the logic of civilization, as we were here to learn. If the bushes and trees on Friedo had been sogged with water, they could not have resisted more successfully the fire we applied to them. It was clear that they had built up within them some kind of mechanism of resistance against drought. We saw, however, that burning was our only chance of clearing out this ground, and so we set ourselves with no less obstinacy than the jungle's own to conquer it.

We made fires which needed continuous stoking. This alone was work as difficult and painful as one could well imagine. We found that we must concentrate on certain strategic points, but to our dismay the fires always spread and proved most difficult to check. Wherever we needed them most, they failed to have the required effect; wherever we did not need them, they spread and blazed with devilish perversity. Branches alone were useless as fuel; these fires had to be built with coal, which was a torment to transport. The fuel gathered, it took us a long time to get the fires properly under way, and no sooner had we turned our back on one of them, to look after another, than the first one went out, dwindling into a thin wisp of smoke. I think we left no human artifice

untried to keep these fiendish fires going. My hands were torn with the thorny branches, and blistered with the heat. Every now and then a dangerous blazing splinter would fly over to where our young banana plants were just beginning to flourish nicely, and we had to leave everything we were doing to arrange a screen of three sheets of corrugated iron around the menaced spot. Also the extreme heat of our furnaces did the young plantation no good. What made everything more difficult was the fact that we had planted all our shoots in among the clumps of thicket, wherever we found what looked to be a promising piece of earth to put them in. Looking after all these scattered darlings now was a desperate job. We had to be particularly careful how and where we built our fires, for they had to remain burning all night, when there was no one to look after them, and we had to be careful that they would do no danger while we slept. We toiled at this most arduous work from dawn till far into the night. With showers of blazing sparks from falling branches, flames flaring up as fresh twigs caught afire, the glow of smoldering tree stumps and tall logs, Friedo in those days resembled an inferno rather than an Eden. Frederick and I certainly looked the part of Satan's stokers—covered from head to foot with soot and grime, we looked more diabolical than human. But we were not so satanic as not to think often and with guilty consciences of the wild creatures whose lives and homes we were destroying. Rats fled away before our fires, many of them only to fall victims to my cat. We must have destroyed hundreds of birds' nests, but I consoled myself with the thought that the island offered so much other shelter that no creature we drove off had lost its chance of home.

This cat of mine was an odd animal, so intensely domesticated that she had not been able to find her way back to wildness. When I found her, her delight at seeing a human being was touching in the extreme. After a month or two with us she clung to me and Friedo with such devotion and apparent gratitude that, while I felt sorry for the rats and birds she killed, I could not but be glad when I compared her condition with what it had been when I came upon her, an abandoned, scraggy waif, roaming unhappily about the island.

Our doings were a source of great wonderment to our fellow-dwellers on Floreana. At night we could see the shadowy forms of wild asses and cattle gathered to watch the flames. They would stand at a safe distance, and never venture very near, but one could see astonishment in their whole attitude, though not alarm. One felt that they must be telling one another that there had never been such conflagrations since the last volcano on the island became extinct.

Our primitive deforestation was brought to a premature end—premature, that is, for us—by the arrival of the rainy season. As a matter of fact, the rains were overdue, but in spite of our fears that the prolonged drought might cause our spring to dry up, we had welcomed this tardiness because we were by no means far enough along with the clearing of the ground.

The first great downfall took us by surprise. It came in the middle of the night when we had fallen into bed even more than usually exhausted by our day's work. We were suddenly startled out of sleep by a roar as of a bombardment. It must not be forgotten that our roof was nothing but corrugated iron, uncovered by grasses or any kind of thatch, and this material is the most resonant drum surface in the world. The heavy raindrops pouring down upon it were not like rain but like a veritable explosion. For a moment we thought our dynamite which we had left uncovered under a tree in the garden had been set off by some unknown agency, and rushed out, Frederick with a lantern, I with an old umbrella, to see what damage had been done. We snatched up a piece of tar-paper to lay over the dynamite boxes to protect them from being soaked, and dragging this behind us, we went investigating. Hardly had we reached the place than the rain broke off as suddenly as it had begun. We looked at each other in our night-clothes, I still dragging the tar-paper after me like a sail, and the picture we presented to each other's eyes was so grotesque that we both laughed heartily.

The rainy season was a new school for island dwellers. We found that we had not yet begun to learn some of the simplest lessons of the natural life. For example, the heap of stones which was my cook-stove lay unroofed under what had always been a

cloudless sky, but now, when a deluge was likely to fall at any moment, cooking became a problem. One of our principal dishes was fried sweet potatoes. Very often in these rainy days I no sooner had the fat hot in the pan than the sky rained into it, sending it hissing out in all directions and making frying quite impossible. We saw that it would be necessary, until this season was past, to roof the stove, and accordingly we deprived our house of one of the corrugated iron sheets. This now became my kitchen ceiling.

We soon ceased to take shelter when the downpours came. Indeed, we reveled in the delicious feeling of the cool showers running down our hot and weary bodies while we worked. The rains on Floreana were not the terrific cloudbursts of the other tropics. It seldom rained with violence and often there were long gaps of days when it was quite dry. Nor did we ever once experience a thunderstorm. I thought it very curious that although Friedo was by no means high up on the mountain slope, it rained much more there than down on the beach, and sometimes we made the shore a kind of dry resort when tired of the humidity higher up. In the four years we inhabited the island it actually rained on the shore less than a week each year.

The wet season caused a great new rush of life in all the vegetation. The acacia props which held our roof and the branches which formed rough walls about the house began to put forth green shoots. It was one of the most extraordinary things I have ever experienced, to find myself inhabiting a living house. The long dry weather must have had a bad effect upon our nerves, although we were not conscious of this. Now when the rains came we felt a kind of peace and quietness within. There can be no doubt that the human mind is partially formed by the kind of climate it ripens in, and such violent readjustments as we had had to make to new conditions must of necessity have called forth a certain opposition in our minds, whether we were aware of it or not.

But there is no advantage, seemingly, that does not bring a disadvantage in its train, and we had not long to wait before the peace the rains brought our minds was offset by the torments which

they unleashed against our poor bodies. Friedo became alive with a veritable plague of every kind of savage insect. There were cockroaches and beetles, a dozen kinds of caterpillars, plant-lice and ants: especially ants—the red and black varieties, inexhaustible, impossible to keep in check, let alone exterminate. The plant-eaters, unless you match their inextinguishable greed with every scrap of human cunning you can muster, will raze your hard-won plantation to the ground overnight. None of these pests, not even the mosquitoes and the grasshoppers and cockroaches, could compare for voraciousness and savagery with the ants. They came in legions, and where they touched they stung. No sweet thing and no fat was safe against them. We hung our food from strings, carefully gumming the string to catch the ants before they could reach it, but the invaders made their way over the corpses of the imprisoned and reached the booty just the same. They attacked us in our beds and drove us out many a night, so that we started our morning work worn out for lack of sleep. The only island pest from which the rainy season seemed to have delivered us was the sand-flea. It probably flourished only in dry weather, but so fearful a scourge were all the rest, and so completely did their torments and depredations occupy us, that we had no time to be grateful for the absence of the sand-flea until afterwards. We often wondered whether the mainland forests could supply us with an armadillo, but by the time we had a chance to ask about this we had forgotten the rainy season, and when the weather was moderately dry we found that we were more or less able to cope with the marauding ants.

In time we cleared a space 150 feet wide by about 120 feet long. It was an immense labor to lever out the huge lava rocks with nothing but a crow-bar to lift them from the bed where they had lain for many ages. Frederick carted more than five thousand wheelbarrows of good earth to fill up the holes that the clearing of the boulders had left. Then one day he discovered a bed of clay, and this auspicious circumstance enabled him to develop a most efficient irrigation system by lining the channels with this impenetrable material. He ran a ditch on either side of our cleared space and the water met again in a natural basin in the lava floor. From

this he laid a pipe so that the overflow of the basin could provide us with a natural shower bath.

Our domain ran east and west and was shaped like a flat-iron, with the spring at the point and the house at the broad end. Along one whole side we planted a double row of bananas. We had semi-circular rows of cocoanuts next to the spring. We now began our most ambitious project, the building of a glass house on a stone foundation. It was to be circular in shape, and built so high that it would stand above the trees and enable us to gain a view of the sea below. It was to have a domed roof, glassed in, and was to be open to the sun on every side. This house was never finished, but we lavished our most intensive work upon it. The building of the pyramids was not attended by any greater labor. The foundation was formed of the largest boulders we could move. We pushed them into place up a gangway of inclined tree trunks, using all our strength, and risking life and limb in the process, for some of the boulders were so large that if they had rolled back upon us we should have been crushed. By the time the tragic developments of our life at Friedo had rendered this architectural plan impossible ever to carry out, we had at least got so far as to raise the complete foundation and build a flight of wide steps leading up to what was to have been the house.

But these developments were already preparing, and suddenly the first blow fell. February, March, and April of that year were the happiest time we spent on Floreana. It was the time of our hardest work but of our brightest hope. A sense of permanence had allied itself to peacefulness, a kind of strange assurance had filled us, that we had been in some way put to a test of fitness and had been accepted.

It was the 5th of May. We went down to Post Office Bay early in the morning and there, to our surprise, the *Manuel y Cobos* was just putting in. Eager to talk to Captain Bruuns, we could hardly wait till one of the life-boats which had been floated arrived to fetch us. The crew told us that Captain Bruuns was not along this trip—but some one else was expecting us. The "some one else" was a courier specially dispatched by the Ecuadorean post-office officials to deliver our mail. To our sheer amazement he handed

us a parcel of what looked like hundreds of letters. We thought at first that every member of every yachting party we had met must have written to us daily since he left, and we took out this surprising post by handfuls, counting it. There were forty-six letters. There was no time to read them aboard the *Cobos*, which was waiting to sail, so when we had been landed, we sat down on the beach to look at them, turning them over to see the names of the senders. Then we realized that they were not from our new acquaintances at all, but were mostly from Germany, and not a single envelope bore a name we knew. I looked at Frederick and he at me; we could make nothing of this thing. Besides the letters, there were newspapers. Frederick suggested that we open nothing until we return to Friedo—it was as though he sensed something amiss, and I for my part was only too glad to wait. When we got back, Frederick had to look after something in the garden, leaving me alone with the mysterious mail.

The first thing I opened was a newspaper. I unfolded it with a certain apprehension, lest some new political trouble had broken out in our tormented country, but what was my dismay and consternation as I read the headlines! They told of Frederick's flight from civilization with a woman. In an instant of cowardice I prayed that my name had not been mentioned. But the next moment I was ashamed to have wished this, for if Frederick was to be criticized, then I must not shirk anything but stand by him, whatever might come. I need not have worried; my name was also there. Then I burst into desperate tears. At that moment Frederick came back.

"What has happened?" he asked. "Why are you crying?"

I was too overcome to answer and merely put the paper in his hands. "This is the end of everything," I said.

Frederick, no less upset than I, took this unfortunate publicity more calmly. He said that we had already braved much and must be prepared to go through with the rest, and pointed out that after all this would be more easily borne now we were safely away than if it had happened by some unlucky chance before we left.

The newspaper account was written in that vein of cheap sensationalism which debases every high intention and panders to the

lowest curiosity of the crowd. I felt as though the things that Frederick and I held most sacred were being dragged mercilessly through the mire. I was inconsolable. My first thought was for my people, and the new annoyance and shame to which this would expose them. I thought too of my husband, and how he had tolerated everything that had happened in order to keep his name clear from scandal. Now his tolerance and effort had been in vain, and I knew exactly how he must be suffering. Without exception the letters were from perfect strangers. Some were sympathetic and agreeable to read, but most were obviously written by eccentrics and cranks who assumed that we were like themselves. We felt that all the writers were tactless intruders upon our privacy. I was filled with cold horror at the thought that some of these people might even come to Floreana. Throughout the sleepless night that followed, the direst apprehensions filled my mind. The past surged back upon me. But when the storm was past I thought the situation over clearly and saw this untoward development in the light of a new test which fate had laid upon me. What I had done I had done for love, and had nothing to regret. If others back home were to pay the price of my action, this could not be helped, and I could only pay it back to them by making our experiment as great as we intended it to be.

From now on there was no more peace at Friedo. A radio telegram had destroyed this as surely and as swiftly as a single stroke of lightning destroys a living tree. We had become objects of sensational publicity. People in many countries read garbled and exaggerated accounts of who we were and what our aims had been in cutting ourselves off from their world. Letters and more letters were to come from now on. Sometimes we let them lie, but more often a horrible fascination compelled us to see what they contained. Fortunately we had so much to do that there was no time for brooding, and when our wholesome daily toil was done we were too tired to think of anything at all. But there was already a fresh presage of evil.

Chapter IX: THE WOULD-BE'S

ONE DAY LOUD VOICES AND A FURIOUS CRASHING THROUGH the thickets bordering Friedo announced the arrival of human beings. (The animal invaders of our peace used only to come at night, for the spring had remained a favorite watering-place in spite of our presence in its immediate neighborhood. Glad though we were that we had not frightened them away, it cost us hours' work every day repairing the nocturnal damage done to our fence, for it was only seldom that an animal hurdled it; usually they preferred to push their way through.) Hearing therefore, this loud commotion in broad daylight, we knew that only human beings could be causing it, and Frederick left his work to see who had come. A party of Indios emerged into the clearing, bringing news that the long-awaited Captain Bruuns had finally arrived. They said that he was coming up to Friedo from Black Beach, and Frederick at once went down to meet him.

The Indios meanwhile, waiting for their master, proceeded to make a close inspection of our domain. It seemed to thrill them enormously, and they expressed incredulous wonderment at the amount of ground we had cleared with the labor of our own hands. They were full of admiration for the plants that we had set out and which were now grown to a goodly size. The house particularly fascinated them and they could not see enough of all the strange things we had brought with us. They were friendly and inquisitive like animals, and their interest amused me so much that I showed them many things we had made. I never expect to have a more appreciative audience. Their admiration flattered the great pride I took in some of our ingenious contraptions, and one or two of them were able to suggest a few improvements out of their native knowledge and experience of life in wild places. They kept returning to our architectural triumph, the stone foundation for our future house. They seemed wholly unable to credit the evidence of their eyes and believe that two people, one of them a very weak woman, had raised those huge, shiny rocks up to such a height and built them to such a solid base. One after another they tried the steps and were amazed to see how solidly they held, and

I dare say myself that later visitors to Floreana will assume, unless they happen to read these pages, that the tall base was the work of many hands, intended perhaps as a look-out station or some such device.

After a while Frederick came back with Captain Bruuns. The latter was, as usual, extremely voluble, bluff and hearty, and full of apologies for having kept us waiting so long for his return. He had a very plausible story to account for the plundering of the Casa. It seemed that he had sent a boat to fetch the things there that had belonged to him, dismantle the derelict machinery and convey it to the mainland. He professed himself greatly upset at hearing that all our belongings had been removed as well, and spun a long yarn to the effect that his envoys had arrived, expecting to find us living in the house, and had been very much surprised and not a little alarmed at finding it deserted. He told us that they had considered the matter and decided it was useless to search for us upon the island, for probably we had fallen victim to some wild animal's attack. They had insisted, so he said, that there was no sign of us anywhere; if we were still alive, then we had surely gone away to Isabella, and would let ourselves be heard from of our own accord. In any case, we had left all our stores unprotected, which they took as a clear sign that we were no longer on Floreana. This glib story did not convince me in the least. I said that it was all very well, but what about the little rowing-boat? That was as clear a sign as any that we had not gone to Isabella, and I should greatly like to know what he had done with it, and when he intended to return it to us. Hereupon Captain Bruuns lost a little of his assurance, but argued that the *Mary Pinchot* people could not possibly have meant it to be a gift to us; they had certainly intended it for himself. Frederick did not press the point, and when I saw that he was simply leaving the honors to the Captain without further struggle, I did so too. The Captain, thus having won hands down all around, began to make us lavish promises to bring all kinds of things the next time he came by; in fact he almost hinted that he would make a special voyage to bring us the "whole house" we had already had on order for a very long time. We had never known him so assiduous, and while I was

wondering whether the ease with which he had got away with all the rest could alone be responsible for this sudden enthusiasm, it slipped out that he had heard about the visit of the *Mizpah* and the other yacht.

Now we learned that the wildest stories were coursing up and down the island about the unheard-of largesse which had been showered on us by the rich Americans. Bruuns looked around, as though expecting to see the evidence of all this generosity. Then even Frederick's inexplicable tolerance towards this old villain began to give way to something like normal fury at the casual manner in which the robbery at the Casa had been accounted for; as he got the drift of the Captain's new approach, his anger turned to blank astonishment. At first it seemed as though Captain Bruuns was laying claim to a share of the costly presents we were supposed to have received, and this rather amused than angered us. Finally, however, he came out with something that upset us seriously.

"I have decided," he said, "to give up this plying between the islands. This cruise is almost my last one in the *Manuel y Cobos*. I'm coming here to live."

"What!" we both cried together, unable to believe our ears.

"Yes," said the Captain, "I'm going to start a fishing station. I shall live at the Casa and make it my headquarters. We shall be able to help each other. There's a very good thing to be made out of fishing. I've got a partner in Guayaquil, a fellow named Arends. He's a smart young man and thinks very well of our prospects. No one's ever yet tried to fish these waters for what's in them, but I'm going to, and you'll see we'll bring some life onto this island soon."

Neither Frederick nor I could find a suitable answer to all this. There was no use in our trying to dissuade him, but we both felt that there would be no room on Floreana for us and fishing enterprises together. We did not know which in the end would make way for the other.

I was always glad to see the back of Captain Bruuns, but never so glad as on that day, when after spending another hour enthusiastically outlining his plans, he called the Indios and left Friedo,

telling us that we might now expect him back any day for good. When he was gone, Frederick and I looked at each other, unable for a moment to say a single word. Nothing could have more dismayed us than the prospect of having the Captain as a permanent neighbor. I remembered the days when I had inwardly stormed at Frederick for choosing to settle so far away from the Casa with its obvious conveniences. Now I was infinitely grateful for the rough way that would in future separate us from these undesired fellow dwellers on the island. I decided inwardly that Post Office Bay would see us no more, and I was fairly certain that the lava fields would prove an effective barrier between Friedo and the fishing station. I thought with apprehension and pity of the now long unmolested cattle which the Captain's Indios, Hugo-like, would begin again to persecute, and of the poor horses which would now, no doubt, be brought back into captivity. However, it was no use worrying too greatly over things that couldn't be prevented, and we decided to try and put the Captain and his enterprises out of our minds as far as possible, at least forget them until they should actually arrive. I said to Frederick, "Until he comes, Floreana will still be ours. Let us enjoy it all the more, if our undisturbed possession is to be so short. . . ."

What an illusion! Floreana was already ours no longer. Hardly had the sinful hull of the *Manuel y Cobos* disappeared from sight than a new craft arrived, and after this another, and another, and still another. Settlers had come, lured by the stories which had now begun to circulate in all the world's newspapers. These had described the island as a paradise, as an idyllic tropical resort, where man and beast could live harmoniously together, and natural orchards dropped rich fruits into the lap, as in a dream of Caliban's. The romantic journalists had been at work, and this was the result.

The first batch of these extensively deceived young people included five quite youthful Germans. They arrived separately, but finding themselves together on the island, joined forces, and took possession of the caves for the time being. It was not long before the last of the five found the others incompatible, and built himself a hut under the spreading branches of a huge acacia some five minutes' distance from the caves. The other four remained

together, and on Sundays would often visit us, as did the solitary one. We entertained them all, never attempting to take sides in their trivial differences—plenty of which arose—and giving them impartially such help and advice as we could. We also shared a number of our plants with them and gave them gardening hints which they badly needed, for they had all come as inadequately equipped with knowledge as with implements. They seem to have thought that the whole thing was a light and simple adventure, but they had not been long on Floreana before they saw how gravely they had been mistaken in this idea. On the whole, however, they behaved with much tact and kept well out of sight, except when we invited them to call. They had a proper respect for our desire for isolation, which they had read about in the articles which had inspired them to come. Although the story of our experiment had now been published in the press of many countries, strangely enough the settlers who came were all from Germany. Perhaps one could not have a better proof than this of how the misery and hardships under which our vanquished country had labored since the war had filled many Germans, including ourselves, with a sense of hopelessness and need for radical renewal. True, the aims of these people were different from ours, but the urge to free themselves from the material and spiritual prison that Germany had become was as intense in them as it had been in us.

The young settlers, in their earlier conversations with us, were less frank than they were afterwards. It gradually came out that they had not been attracted to Floreana solely, or even mainly, in search of individual freedom. On the contrary, they hoped to reap the reward that comes to those first on the spot. They told us that the United States government was about to purchase the Galapagos group of islands as a natural preserve for the sum of twenty-five million dollars. Another report said that the Japanese government was pressing the authorities of Ecuador for a rapid decision. This, however, was being postponed, for the neighboring South American states were bringing pressure upon Ecuador not to sell. But our young settlers were full of optimism, being convinced that the triumph of the dollar was in every case a foregone conclusion.

One of the most curious would-be settlers we ever had on

Floreana was a German woman from Berlin who had brought her husband down there, convinced that the Pacific air would cure him of his lung disease. We did not know how long she had been inhabiting the island when she turned up one day at Friedo, surely the oddest apparition that ever emerged from the dense thicket into our little clearing. She was accompanied by an Indio woman servant of very unusual appearance who, it turned out later, was subject to fits of unconsciousness due to a type of epilepsy, Frederick said. An Indio guide had shown them the way. The lady was most unsuitably attired in a silk gown and silk stockings, and her fingers were fairly corruscated with diamond rings. She declared with almost embarrassing enthusiasm how passionate a nature-worshiper she was, and expressed herself ecstatically about the island. She told us that she had called upon the President of Ecuador, and that he took the greatest interest in her plans, and had offered her every assistance she might require. In very little time she had poured into our astonished ears the entire story of her life, and with no further invitation she proceeded to look into everything on Friedo. Everything she saw evoked loud exclamations, and she had a thousand questions for every answer. But when she caught sight of our greatest treasure, the spring, she outgushed its gushing, and no wonder, for Captain Bruuns had begun to do a lucrative trade in the sale of distilled water to the settlers. He had recently arrived and was busy at the Casa laying the foundations of his future fortune in the fish business.

The ecstatic lady was full of indignation at the chilly reception which she said she had received at the hands of the five cave-dwellers. She next informed us, to our intense consternation, that the sight of Friedo had quite consoled her, for she and her husband would be far more comfortable and happy in our "little paradise." Before we could say that Friedo was not a hostel for visitors to Floreana, she had gone over to the ciruela tree and, ignoring us, was discussing with her maid where their tents were to be pitched. She then came back to us and began a long conversation about her love for animals. She was determined, she said, to enrich Floreana with the only thing it lacked to make it perfect. It should become a paradise for monkeys, parrots, dogs, and rabbits. The monkeys

and the parrots she had actually brought along, it seemed. She then told Frederick all the details of her husband's disease and impressed upon him the great advantages which he would reap from having cured a difficult patient in this "coming health resort." She appealed to his conscience and ambition as a medical man to do what he could for her husband, to whom, to do her justice, she seemed genuinely devoted. It took a long time before we could convince this lady that Friedo was ours and that she could not live underneath our ciruela tree. After many hours we got rid of her and she returned in great disappointment and considerable dudgeon to the Casa, where she was no doubt the heavily paying guest of Captain Bruuns.

Her monkeys came to a sad end. There was no food suitable for them on the island. The store of food she had brought for them was exhausted within three days, and one of the Indios was then sent out on a donkey to explore the island for other things that these delicate and fastidious creatures could eat. The oranges and aguacates were not yet even in bud, and these were perhaps the only things they might have been able to eat. The lady told us that she had brought the unfortunate little animals along not only to enrich the island wild life, but also, and in fact chiefly, in order to test the wholesomeness of the wild plants that grew there, before she would risk them as fit for human consumption. She was pathetic as she spoke of her terror at the thought that, after having brought her husband all that way to cure him of consumption, she might cause his death by poisoning. The end of these all too cautious measures was that the unfortunate monkeys were simply turned loose to shift for themselves as best they might. The poor little things—there were three of them—had not a chance on Floreana. One roamed about the island, desperate with thirst, and died in torment within a stone's throw of the spring up at the caves. Either the monkey had not the strength to reach the spring, or had not yet found it. The second, mad with hunger, broke into another settler's kitchen and began flinging the pots and pans furiously about, behaving in such a threatening manner that the only thing to do was to put an end to it. The third of the pitiful little company was never seen again, and must have perished somewhere

wretchedly. Perhaps he found himself among the wild animals upon the *pampa* who must have marveled at him, never having seen his like. Perhaps he sought his two companions everywhere, and died of exhaustion looking for them. I was sorry afterwards that I had not gone out to look for these waifs, and brought them back to Friedo.

The diamond-studded lady with husband and Indio retinue held out one week, then left. She may have taken her patient and her nature worship to another of the islands, but we never heard of her again out there. I, however, was to meet her long afterwards in Europe.

Captain Bruuns, ten Indios, and his partner, Arends, from the mainland, lived at the Casa, which now became a proper fishing station. An atmosphere of great activity pervaded it. We went down there one day and made the acquaintance of the partner. We had expected some one like the Captain, middle-aged, weather-beaten, and experienced in guile. Instead we were greeted by a dark-haired young man of more than usual good looks, about as different from the Captain as one could well imagine. He looked hardly more than a youth, but must have been not less than twenty-five years old. He was Danish, and told us that they had borrowed the capital to float the fishing company and showed us the large motor-boat they had bought. The first catch, it appeared, had exceeded even their rosiest anticipations, and young Arends seemed convinced that they were going to make a very good thing of this unexploited industry. The Captain was a hard worker, and exacted hard work from others.

Post Office Bay was almost unrecognizable. Outside the Casa long benches had been set up, at which several Indios worked simultaneously. Here the fish were cleaned and cut up into slices, a work which had to be done immediately after the catch was brought in, because the tropic sun caused everything to spoil instantly that was not salted almost before the life was out of its body. I used not to go down to the Bay more often than I had to, for I liked the sight of all that gory activity as little as the smell of fish, which now became inseparable from the place. On first landing there, we had seen sharks close against the beach,

and they had filled me then with fear and horror. The newly established fishery brought them now in shoals. The heads and entrails of the fish were dumped back into the sea as near the shore as possible to save unnecessary effort, and henceforth the dreadful sharks were never absent. One almost heard the impact of their great bodies as they collided, crowding ravenously round this new and inexhaustible feeding-place.

The fishery kept Captain Bruuns so busy that to my great relief he did not often visit us at Friedo, and when he did, he did not stay long, though he never missed an opportunity, while there, of telling us how much we had deliberately sacrificed in not going in with him in the fishery and cattle venture. He seemed genuinely to believe that he was destined to make a great fortune out of Floreana, but I, remembering the fate of all his predecessors, thought differently about this. Events proved me right, though no one could possibly have foreseen the end.

Chapter X: THE END OF CAPTAIN BRUUNS

THERE ARE CERTAIN PEOPLE WHO NOT ONLY HAVE A GENIUS for creating trouble themselves, but in whose neighborhood trouble inevitably arises, whether of their direct instigating or not. Captain Bruuns was one of these. Misunderstandings, complications, and annoyances were inseparable from acquaintance and dealings with him, though sometimes he was certainly innocent of them. I confess here with shame that I often unjustly made him the scapegoat for others', and even for my own, mistakes. His pleasant and plausible manner made it impossible to be rough with him while he was about, yet the moment he was out of sight his shortcomings and iniquities stood forth in their true proportions, and made one furious with him. And the fury held until he reappeared, when it was impossible not to be nice to him.

The fishing station was now in full swing, and Captain Bruuns had become a fairly permanent inhabitant of Floreana. Post Office Bay saw me very seldom now in comparison with the times before industrial development reached the island. Still, now and then, I went down there with Frederick, though not exactly for reasons of sociability.

Captain Bruuns and Arends had a visitor who stayed with them at the Casa for a long time. There was something most incongruous in the difference between the Captain and his friend, an aristocratic-looking Norwegian of about sixty years of age. We learned that he had been in his country's consular service, though we were not told where, and he was obviously a person who had once enjoyed high standing and was, in addition, an intellectual and learned man. What mystery overlay his past and what had brought him to these wilds in his later life we never found out. We learned that he was married and that his wife lived at Guayaquil. On my way back to Europe, I called on her and she was very kind to me. Frederick and I both liked this interesting man, and it raised the Captain greatly in my estimation as I saw that the two were really good friends and that Captain Bruuns seemed to be at great pains to help this aristocrat, who was so much his

superior. The former consul often came to visit us at Friedo and we were always sorry when he went.

The spring brought Captain Bruuns a boon companion, far more to his natural taste. One day a small yacht sailed into Post Office Bay and anchored there. Its owner was an English doctor of middle age, and its crew had been reduced to a single negro half-breed. The others had been dropped at various ports, where they had put in down the coast and among the other islands. The doctor told us that he had come from Panama with the express purpose of making the acquaintance of "Dr. Ritter and his wife." He was interested in our ideas, he said, and wished to talk to us about them. He himself was on his way to the South Sea, where he intended to live, like us, a life of complete isolation from the world. His manner was extremely strange. He seemed a prey to uncontrollable nervousness, and smoked continuously, drawing one cigarette after another in an endless chain out of a large tin which bulged from the misshapen pocket of his coat. He seemed to be pursued by something, and gave me the impression that his mind had become enslaved to some power that his will had not the strength to vanquish. It gradually came out that he had been a medical officer in an insane asylum. He talked a great deal of the various patients he had had, and it was not difficult, in the light of this information, to see that his own mind had suffered in contact with those unfortunates. He too was married, but told us that he found it impossible to get on with his wife, and that he had therefore decided to make an end of trying, and seek solution of his problems in escape from the world. He was alternately dully and violently miserable. He had obviously hoped in some vague way that we should be able to tell him what he wanted, and show him how to find the peace that he was looking for; but we were far too different from himself, and so could give him little help.

If we ourselves disappointed him, Floreana apparently did not. He did not move on towards the South Sea, but lived out in the bay and spent his days, and many of his nights, with Bruuns ashore. We saw less and less of him, but he and the Captain became inseparable. Night after night they sat together drinking guarapo,

a potent distillation of the sugar cane, and no doubt both of them exchanged many a dark reminiscence in their hours of drunken confidences. We heard about them from the Indios, and I fear that I looked upon them at that time with far less sympathy and understanding than I have for them now, when it is too late. They seemed to me then worthless and weak-willed. I knew too little of life to realize what a poor end it can make of fine and admirable beginnings. Looking back afterwards, I was grateful to the doctor for having come to Floreana when he did, for the days of Captain Bruuns were numbered, though nobody suspected it, and the doctor's companionship was the last that he was to enjoy on this earth. I had the impression, too, that Captain Bruuns became more intimate with this new friend and found him more understanding than any of the other people I had seen him with, and I have often thought since that the fates must have sent the strange wanderer to him as a slight compensation for all the trouble that he suffered in his life, and for the tragic end that they had designed for him.

The Captain, however, apparently had no presentiments. He was full of plans for the expansion of his fishing interests and the promising beginning had filled him with the rosiest hopes. He was never tired of entertaining his new friend with details of his projects, to which the other listened with untiring sympathy and interest. There was something touching in the attitude of this derelict physician towards the Captain, whose story he may or may not have known but in whom he seemed to sense a man who had, like himself, lost his way in life, and needed help and encouragement. This was a little interlude of peace, soon to lead into the final act of Captain Bruuns' tragedy. As I have said, now that the Captain made Floreana his residence, a number of visitors were always at the Casa. The governor of the Galapagos was staying there at the time of which I speak.

One day, finding that his supplies of food and salt for curing were running low, Captain Bruuns decided to go on a replenishing expedition to Isabella. His motorboat, the *Norge*, was large enough to carry a good-sized party and so he set out with his guest the governor, the English alienist, one of the young German colonists,

now about to leave the island for good, and eight peons. It so happened that that day I found myself at a point near Friedo which afforded a wide view over Black Beach and out to sea, and suddenly I turned my head and saw the expedition putting out into the still water. Our little rowing-boat was trailing like a dove-gray captive behind the *Norge*, and I remember the anger that shook me every time I saw it in the Captain's possession. It was the only piece of property that I have ever really minded being deprived of. The day was so quiet that I could almost hear the chugging of the motor. Then suddenly the swift Antarctic current caught the boat and swept it on with great rapidity towards Isabella. This stream is so powerful that it takes but five hours to make the sixty miles to the other island, though it takes twelve and more to get back. It can actually be seen within the bosom of the ocean; it is like a streak of ebony in the midst of the blue calm. On that particular day it looked more clear than ever, somehow menacing in its fierce strength, though speeding the travelers on their way and seeming to favor their purposes. I remember that I turned away, feeling somehow overwhelmed and grateful for the peace and safety of our Friedo. That was the last I ever saw of Captain Bruuns.

Later we pieced his story together from the horrified accounts of the survivors. The party arrived safe and sound, and in the best of spirits, at Isabella, where the required provisions were duly brought aboard. They then set out again, hoping to reach Floreana by nightfall, since the Casa was left practically unprotected in the Captain's absence. Arends was seldom there, but spent most of his time at Guayaquil, attending to the mercantile end of the fishing business. For some time past, the profits had been less than in the beginning, which was another reason why the Captain had now set to work with redoubled energy to make the venture a success. Indeed, Frederick and I often marveled at the prodigies of work this man, long past his youth and completely unused to manual labor, showed himself able to perform.

The *Norge* was well away from Isabella when the skipper discovered that there was not gasoline enough in the tank to bring them to Floreana against the driving current of the Antarctic

stream. He turned back towards the port of Isabella, but the current bore the motorboat out of its course, and forced it off to St. Pedro's Bay, where there was nothing for it but to anchor, the gasoline having been used down to the last drop. There is no settlement at St. Pedro's Bay, which lies at the southwestern tip of Isabella Island; the nearest help was to be found at Villamil, a good eighty kilometers farther down the coast as the crow flies, and terribly difficult to come at overland. The stranded party held a council, and it was decided that the governor and Schmidt, the German settler, together with a few of the Indios, should start out immediately to try and reach Villamil by way of an Indio settlement which lay some distance inland. Meanwhile Captain Bruuns had improvised a sail which he now raised in our little gray rowing-boat, and prepared to put off with some Indios for Floreana. The English doctor with the remaining natives was to stay on the *Norge* until called for.

Our narrators did not need to tell us what it meant to get from St. Pedro's Bay to Villamil. We knew that one Galapagos shore was the same as another, the most inhospitable ground that human feet could tread upon. It did not surprise us in the least to hear that of the overland party some had taken four, some twelve, days to reach the settlement of Villamil, after a parched and painful journey. Their feet were in a fearful state, their shoes having been torn to shreds by the sharp lava. For food they had eaten leguana and edible cacti, which had somewhat helped to ease their thirst. The English doctor on the motorboat waited in the midst of plenty, but suffered, as he told us afterwards, many terrors, for he was not used to wild and desolate surroundings, and feared that he might never be fetched away by the returning party, but be left either to the mercy of the two Indios on board, or else be driven, after a long time of fruitless waiting, to leave the boat and find his way to Villamil alone. He wished that he had gone along with Captain Brunns, who had seemed to think that he would have no difficulty in reaching safety in the little boat.

He would have wished this less if he had known how near at hand disaster lay for the all-too-hopeful Bruuns. Our little rowing-boat was by no means a success in its transformed condition. The

sail was immediately blown to ribbons, and Captain Bruuns saw that he had not a chance in the world of getting near Floreana, with a current like that against his fragile craft. This was a disappointment, for he had meant to fetch a second motorboat which he had lying in Post Office Bay and tow the *Norge* back with it. Now, however, he decided that the most reasonable thing to do was to put in at Villamil, and this he did. It took him exactly as long to get there rowing as it took the fastest and luckiest of the overland party to reach their destination on foot. At the settlement they were told that the *Cobos* was due and hourly expected. This was good news and cheered the others considerably. But Captain Bruuns, possessed by a demon, still insisted that he would sail in his rowing-boat if it was the last thing he did, and set about constructing a firmer mast and a more durable and larger sail. Before his work was done the *Cobos* had arrived. No one was surprised to see her except Bruuns, her own ex-skipper, who seemingly could not get used to the new punctuality she had acquired under his successor. Some of the rest of the overland party had now come in, and they all went on board, in order to join the *Norge* with renewed supplies of gasoline. They set off and came within sight of the *Norge*.

San Pedro's Bay is hardly more than a cove, and the *Cobos* could not put in close enough for gasoline to be reached down to the motorboat over her side. The skipper of the *Cobos* wanted to send some one off in our rowboat with fuel to tank up the *Norge*, which could then accompany the schooner to Floreana. Captain Bruuns would not hear of this. He was extremely proud of his *Norge*, and in a spirit of wild and misguided sportsmanship he wagered the skipper of the *Cobos* that he and his people would land at Post Office Bay before the ancient pirate ship came within sight of the island's tallest volcano. The skipper took the bet. The governor of the islands had no intention of risking any further adventures, and so remained aboard the *Cobos*, which was to take him later on to other islands.

The little rowing-boat now received its load of fuel for the *Norge*, together with the German settler, the bold Captain and his men. Even at the best of times and on the smoothest and most

innocent sea, this would have been too much to crowd into the little craft. It put off, however, jauntily, and the last the *Cobos* saw of it it looked promising enough. But it was not long before the current drew the little boat more and more powerfully towards the dangerous edge of the coast, where breakers dashed in white surf against the hidden lava rocks, a trap for every mariner. The heavy swell became more ominous with every stroke, and it seemed each moment that the next breaking wave must engulf the boat.

Then came misfortune. The current wrenched one oar out of an Indio's hand. He leaned over the side to catch it as it sprang out of reach, and the oncoming breaker overwhelmed them. Still the boat had not capsized, and did not do so even as another and another breaker followed, burying it beneath them. In the feverish intervals between breakers, they tried to bail out the water by every means at their disposal. But there could be only one issue to the unequal combat. The little boat went down. The German and one of the Indios actually succeeded in swimming ashore, and landed safely.

The Captain and two others tried to achieve the impossible and bring the boat to shore; it had not yet capsized, though it was now far beneath the water, and the waves did not allow it to rise again to the surface. The Indios had no desire for a watery grave and foolhardy wagers meant as little to them as an old mariner's stubborn pride in his capacity to beat the worst sea under heaven. Seeing their fellows gone, the Captain's two remaining rowers left the boat and made a dash for safety. Captain Bruuns was now alone. So long as the little boat did not turn turtle he would stand by, though now the water reached to his chin; the boat was literally sinking under him.

At last he saw that it was hopeless and he too gave up the struggle. The beach was so near that he could almost touch it with his hands. The others had landed, and stood in dire suspense watching him in his lonely struggle against the furious sea. They saw him swim a few strokes towards them, then suddenly turn back. A wave engulfed him, and when it had receded they saw him once more bravely striking out for a small patch of beach, trying to avoid the vicious rocks between. He was so close that

they could almost see the stubborn desperation in his face, and it seemed for a moment as though his powerful strokes would bring him to safety after all. Then a last wave came, lifting him on its curve like a spar of flotsam. They saw him rise, now struggling no longer but as though he had at last surrendered. They did not see him fall, but knew that he would not be seen alive again.

They hastened to the spot among the rocks, sure that they would find him there, and there he lay, not drowned, but dashed to death against the reef. His doctor friend, in a forlorn hope that he might be unconscious, tried to bring life back, but it was in vain. He had been smashed by the impact of sea and land, perhaps the right death for one who in his life had served and sinned against them both.

They buried him close to where they found him, raising a pile of black lava stones to mark the place. A rough cross with his name upon it was set up, and that was the end of Captain Bruuns.

The loss of the rowing-boat meant the loss of all the fuel it had cost so much to bring, and now the party found itself in no better plight than when the gasoline had first given out. The *Norge* was no light craft, but twelve tons weight, and there was nothing to be done now but for these seven stranded men with six oars among them to row it all the way to Villamil.

The harrowing experiences of the past hours had not increased their confidence. The swift Antarctic current and the wild breakers were full of too familiar terrors for them all. But they were forced to take the risk, for to attempt another twelve days' journey overland in their exhausted state was worse than braving the most treacherous waters. They chose the lesser evil, therefore, and actually succeeded in preventing the fast-running stream from drawing them out into the open reaches of the ocean. With superhuman strength they kept close to the shore and brought the *Norge* into another bay and tied her up. The way by water was no longer feasible, so once again they set out overland for Villamil, repeating the experiences of the first trip, suffering agonies of thirst and hunger and torn feet lacerated by the cruel stones. They all arrived to tell their story to the wondering inhabitants.

The *Cobos*, victor in the tragic wager, waited a few days in

Post Office Bay for the arrival of the *Norge*, and as she did not come, departed, overdue, for Chatham, taking along the German's fellow settlers, the last of the party of five to leave the island.

Captain Bruuns' young partner, Arends, had been in a hospital at Guayaquil, and had now returned to Floreana. He waited twelve days for the Captain to come back and with him waited Bruuns' old friend, the ex-consul. The skipper of the *Cobos* had told them that the *Norge* had been freshly provisioned with food and fuel, but counting the days and the number of men aboard her, the waiters at Floreana gradually realized that she must now be either out at sea and running dangerously short again, or else held up at Isabella by some mysterious accident. Young Arends became seriously alarmed, and one day decided to go in search of his partner and friend. He took the negro half-breed and two peons, and put off in the last remaining boat with a motor attached. In this inadequate craft they set out. They came to San Pedro's Bay, and the story of the little rowing-boat, once ours, repeated itself.

The breakers literally smashed their boat to smithereens. What happened to the Indios remained, for the time being, unknown, but Arends and the negro managed to swim ashore. One of the Indios turned up later on in Villamil—the other must have perished on the way of hunger and thirst, if indeed he ever reached the coast.

Young Arends, cast up on the shore so near to where the Captain had met his fate, began to look around him. His hope of finding the *Norge* where the *Cobos* people told him they had left her disappeared. There was no sign of ship or living person. While debating in his mind what would be best to do, his feet brought him to the spot where Captain Bruuns was buried. To his dismay and horror he suddenly caught sight of the mound of black stones, surmounted by the rude cross, and going over to it read the Captain's name inscribed in a rough hand. All evil omens seemed to the young rescuer concentrated in that sinister discovery. At first he stood quite paralyzed with sick surprise, then, as he told us afterwards, he fell down on the stony ground beside the grave, and wept there for a long time.

Chapter XI: BURRO, THE NEW HOUSE AND CERTAIN INTRUSIONS

TO BEGIN WITH THE LAST THING FIRST: IT SOUNDS discourteous to put our visitors down here as intruders, yet pleasant as they were as human beings, most of them, we did at times resent their coming. It might be said that had we wished to seriously, we could easily have refused to talk to anybody or entertain a single stranger in our Friedo seclusion. Sometimes, indeed, we were almost tempted to do this, but when we thought of the sheer physical effort it cost to clamber up the rough hillside to us, we felt that to turn our backs on these well-meaning callers would be too churlish. So we never did. We had longed to free ourselves from contact with the world, and it was a bitter shock when the world found us out and pursued us into our retreat. But once discovered, it was our wish to appear uneccentric. We could not help it that publicity had fastened on us, we could only do our best to take it lightly and give professional and amateur reporters of our doings at least as natural a story as possible to take home with them.

With Arends disappeared—for no one on the island knew exactly where he had gone—and the Captain dead and buried, Post Office Bay was no longer a scene of commercial enterprise, but had returned to normal. The former consul still lived at the Casa, coming occasionally to Friedo, where he was always welcome. It is in all such places an unwritten law that no questions shall be asked, and so we never forced the confidence of this strange man, nor asked him whether he expected to spend the rest of his days down in that dreary harbor with a wife at Guayaquil, waiting, as I heard later from herself, month after month for his return. He never talked about himself, and there was a kind of dignity about him that made one feel it almost an indiscretion even to speculate in silence as to the circumstances of his life.

It was at Friedo only that one could completely lose the feeling of uncanniness which pervaded the entire island. The ghosts of human beings and their deeds roamed over all of Floreana except there. The tragedies and mishaps which had occurred, even in our own short time, seemed to tell all too clearly of malignant influ-

ences at work, and I feared the island gods with all the more reason, now that we had actually witnessed their hostility. But Friedo seemed, in some inexplicable way, to stand under their protection. No untoward thing had happened there, and lulled in the false security of happiness in an earthly dream fulfilled, I believed that we were tolerated. Friedo was to us a world within a world, complete in itself, and our only true reality. We felt that what went on outside it concerned us very little. Yet this island which, so short a while ago, had been to us not even a name upon a map was now closely identified with our immediate experience; we belonged to it and it to us, and could not quite dissociate ourselves from anything that concerned it.

I have sometimes wondered how things would have been had we really come to a place of utter solitude, but perhaps there is no such spot left now on the habitable globe. As it was, the people and doings of the outside world were continually forcing themselves upon our notice, and involving us with themselves. We had had five months only of the isolation we had sought, for the presence of Hugo had not really counted. When that short half year was over, there began an intermittent stream of contacts, some merely passing like the yachting parties, some of longer duration like the would-be settlers, some quasi-permanent like Captain Bruuns and the former Norwegian consul. Not that we saw our neighbors daily or even weekly—sometimes several weeks went by without our even catching sight of anybody. Nonetheless, we were aware of them, and it is not surprising that a curious undercurrent of apprehension in our minds made itself felt whenever their existence occurred to us afresh.

And now the journalists began to come. This was a heavy trial for us at first and called for all our self-restraint. We thought it truly horrible to be questioned and photographed, and exposed to the merciless gaping of the world that we had left. I suffered doubly and trebly on these occasions, for although I had broken with the old life, I had not grown callous towards those who had once been dear to me. And most of all I was tormented by a sense of dreadful guilt towards my husband, who, I knew, would suffer tortures at this publicity connected with his name. I reproached

myself a thousand times for not having protected him better and forced him into giving me a divorce. With a divorce I could legally have regained my maiden name, as I have done since. But he had always refused, and this was the result. I felt that I had done him an unpardonable injustice in placing him even unwittingly in a position from which he could not escape. When the German newspaper accounts told how the reporters had even invaded the privacy of his home to question him about me, my distress was boundless. As unendurable as this was the information which told how reporters had visited Frederick's landlady in the Kalkreuthstrasse and found out from her the name of the doctor's anonymous companion. Even Frederick, though inwardly and outwardly more aloof from all these worldly things than I, showed some dismay at this, for he had so passionate a sense of justice that he too was deeply pained at our having inflicted suffering on Dr. Koerwin and my parents, as well as on his own wife and family, thus forcing them to help to pay for our experiment.

Some of the American visitors had taken the kindliest interest not only in ourselves but in our whole idea, and so we could not resent it if, on returning home, they spoke of us to certain publishers, who in turn stormed us with requests for articles. Some of these requests came from magazines which we knew to be most highly regarded and very influential, and after thinking the matter over from every angle, we felt that it would not be right to refuse what they were asking of us. Accordingly we set ourselves to write a few articles, hoping thereby to correct some of the garbled accounts we had seen. Some of these had truly filled us with dismay, and I remember one which I can still not think of without shame. It described us as promenading through the island in full view of everybody, and particularly of our young Indio lad, completely in the nude, except for "tall boots to protect us from the thorny undergrowth." Not only was this grotesque and highly unæsthetic picture false in fact, but absurd on the face of it, for the thorns at Friedo and elsewhere on the island are by no means undergrowth but at least as high as any man, and to plunge through them unprotected by clothing would be a mad and suicidal proceeding. If we did sometimes play Eve and Adam in our little

Eden, then it was only when we knew ourselves completely alone. In any case nudism was never one of our cults or theories, least of all in Germany at a time when it was coming greatly into vogue.

Our articles, then, were written in the hope of righting the exaggerated ideas of our Friedo existence which had begun to circulate in the world, and to explain to intelligent and sympathetic readers what the true nature of our mission was. For though a mission is usually associated with bringing light to others, we thought, and I still think, that enlightenment, like charity, begins at home. Therefore, for the time being at least, we were both teachers and disciples of a doctrine which we hoped might show us the way to a better life. Having attained it ourselves, we might then have told others about it. Perhaps we should never have got so far as teaching, but come to our natural end still looking for the truth ourselves. Had things gone as we dreamed and hoped when we set out, I truly believe we would have lived on Floreana happily and died in peaceful old age, forgotten by everybody.

But we made the all too human error of failing to reckon with the superhuman. The word about us innocently sent out by a passing visitor, the unrecognized warning given us in the tragedy that overtook others, the quick succession of events that started with the arrival of the Baroness and led through strife to death and dark mystery—these were all pieces in a game of fate played by invisible players. Yet, strangely, I believe that, even had we known, we should have waited to see the game out.

When the tide of journalistic interest in us ebbed at last, we hoped that we should now be left in peace, that the inquisitive world would turn to other themes for its amusement. We did not know that in a little while the Baroness would come, providing new sensations for the world's press.

I am not so misanthropic that I am not conscious of saying something harsh and cruel when I record that the many kindnesses we met with were more than outweighed by their reverse. It may be that Frederick and I were not very skillful in our dealings with human beings, perhaps the great sincerity which was in us both revolted against that pandering to empty forms by means of which human beings conceal their actual ill-will towards each other. But

it may also be that in a wild place like Floreana, the primitive character in each person comes out more strongly than elsewhere, so that everybody shows his own true face—a rare sight in this world, and rather disconcerting.

I was shocked and outraged at the way the five young colonists treated the animals they had brought with them. Cruelty to animals is a thing I cannot tolerate. I think I mind it far more than any form of cruelty to human beings, whom I consider more than sufficiently equipped to take care of themselves. These five young men had brought along six donkeys for their use. Their stay upon the island was short, yet only one of these poor beasts survived their sojourn, and I think I never saw a creature in more pitiable condition when they left. One of these unhappy victims of human mercilessness and stupidity was a she-ass with a new-born foal. They tied her up with a slip-noose, and one morning found her strangled to death, with the tether stretched so tight that it could only have been done by her deliberately, in a frantic effort to get free. She must have been caught suddenly by the panic terror which often besets animals that have never known captivity when they feel themselves hopelessly tied up. Her baby died a day or two later, for there was no mother left to feed it, and the settlers did not try. Another of these unfortunates they literally flogged to death. They overworked it without pity and overtaxed even its sturdy strength. When it failed they kicked and beat it savagely to drive it on, until at last it died of internal injuries. Only the last of these maltreated slaves seems to have used the cunning and sagacity which are characteristic of its race, and refused to go another step. Its owners did their best, but it held out and at last they saw that it was no use kicking or flogging it any longer, so they simply abandoned it where it lay.

Soon afterwards they left, and one day Frederick met this last survivor by the wayside. It was wandering desolately about, with its bones sticking through its pretty grey coat, all but starved to death. He brought it back, and we built a small enclosure for it near the chicken-coop. We called the donkey by his Spanish name of "Burro," not being able to find a more personal title for him at the moment, but he seemed to like it well enough and answered

to it willingly. Like all good donkeys, he had broad-minded ideas as to what was good to eat, so that it was easy to keep him fed. He enjoyed all kinds of weeds, banana leaves, fruit and vegetable peel, beans, corn-stalks; but what he loved was sugar cane, corn-cobs and papayas. He was a perfect glutton and it was not long before he developed an almost elderly-looking paunch. He lost his scragginess and became a very handsome donkey. This was a source of great pleasure and satisfaction to me, and even to Frederick, though he had looked on Burro, as on all animals, chiefly as a useful addition to our practical equipment. I will tell later about Frederick's attitude towards animals, for it played a most important part in our story. For my part, I loved Burro for what he was, and was extremely proud of him.

It was not altogether an advantage to have made him so attractive. The donkey belles of Floreana found him entirely too agreeable, and they now began to come in crowds at night to Friedo, adding their frenzied love-calls to the usual nocturnal racket. Sometimes this became more than we could stand; then Frederick would have to get up and chase them all away.

I used to take Burro out for half an hour's riding exercise each day, a form of entertainment with which we were both equally unfamiliar. The result was that on one unfortunate occasion he thought the promenade had begun before I did, and started off in a most dashing manner, with me scarcely hoisted and quite unprepared. Before I knew what had happened, I was thrown, and found myself, after a few moments of unconsciousness, on the ground, badly stunned from a collision with the overhanging branch of an acacia. This incident decided Frederick that it was time to take Burro's training in hand, and he spent a good hour teaching him the difference between *whoa* and *giddap*. Having been trained by necessity to preserve his life by his wits, Burro was not slow to learn anything, and this single hour's instruction was all he ever needed.

Burro had an excellent memory, and apart from Friedo, Floreana was filled for him with bitter recollections. The farther away from home we rode, the less amenable he was. He would pull back and stop, and do everything but beg me in so many words please not

to take him back to see again the places where he had been so unhappy. Sometimes I thought it good for him to have me severe; besides, it saved me hours of painful trudging to ride him to the orange grove and back. But whenever we went along the road towards and past the caves, my Burro would try every trick he knew to soften my heart or cheat me into submission. Once, to my great dismay, he suddenly went lame a hundred yards or so before the caves. I got down to find out what the trouble was, but my veterinary knowledge was not sufficient to discover it. I thought that I had better take him back at once to Friedo and let Frederick look at him, and meanwhile I tried to comfort him with all the pretty words that I could think of. He turned his soft, brown eyes upon me and seemed to thank me for my sympathy. I knew that I was not a heavy load for him to carry and so got on his back again and turned him around. No sooner had we started *down* the path than off he flew in high fettle, with no more trace of a limp than he had ever had. Then I knew that he had only fooled me; that the lameness was nothing but a piece of play-acting and guile. I lectured him long and seriously on his moral deficiencies and turned him around again. This time he had the grace to make less fuss; no doubt he realized that he had made a tactical error in showing his triumph too soon.

Then came the rainy season with its accompanying plague of blood-sucking insects which descended with impartial savagery upon man and beast. In his frenzied attempts to rid himself of their attacks, our Burro stamped so madly about in his enclosure that we soon saw it was impossible to keep him there. To our chagrin, at least to mine, we realized that the only thing would be to turn him loose, and I hoped profoundly that I would not lose him as a consequence. The diligent courtship of the lady donkeys on the island had clearly begun to have an effect upon him, and this contributed to our decision; we felt that we ought not be an impediment to any donkey romance. So we let him go off to his wild brethren. I shall never forget how heart-broken I was at the thought of losing my favorite pet. I stood a long time outside his enclosure before I could bring myself to undo the gate that would never shut him in again.

I did not want to see him leave so I simply left the gate wide open and went away, but after a moment I could not help turning round to see if he was gone. I saw him standing in his corral with an incredulous expression. Then he walked slowly out. Just beyond Friedo he caught sight of the wild herd, and the next moment was galloping away with them.

I went about my work that day and succeeding days with a heavy heart. Everywhere I missed my Burro. I had not been able to sleep for several nights before because of the moonlight serenades and his stamping, but now I could not sleep for sadness at the thought that he was there no longer. I resolved to brave Frederick's disapproval and ask him to take down the enclosure which reminded me too much of my lost one. But something kept me from this, perhaps a hope that one day, like a prodigal child, he might come back to us, though actually I did not believe he ever would.

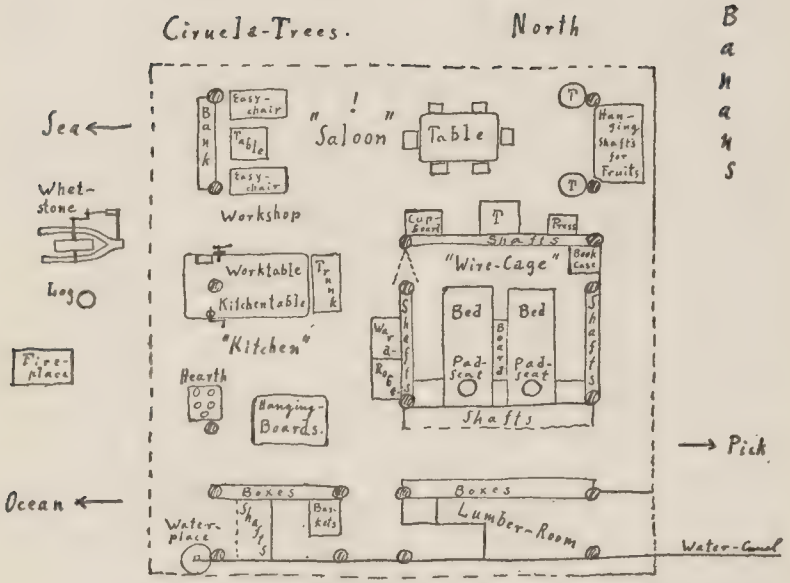
I have never been able to imagine any living creature, human being or animal, not preferring freedom if he could get it. I thought the only reason Burro had starved on the island where the wild asses flourished must have been that they had not accepted him in their midst, but had regarded him as a domesticated alien. Now, however, they had come for him, taken him away. Knowing how untamable and shy the wild asses were, I realized that our chances of seeing him again were remote.

One day about a week later, coming out of the house very early one morning, my first glance went, as usual, towards the empty corral. What was my astonishment at finding it empty no longer. Burro had returned. He looked extremely dejected and a little shamefaced, I thought. Overjoyed, I went in to him, and saw that his neck and ears bore traces of the fray. He had obviously been in conflict with a very powerful opponent, probably a rival in love. Whether he had won or lost, he had clearly been given a bad time. His wounds were full of horrid black insects, and maggots had settled in the gashes. I had to extract them with some pincers of Frederick's. I cleaned and salved the wounds, and kept the patient home for eight days, at the end of which time he was completely recovered.

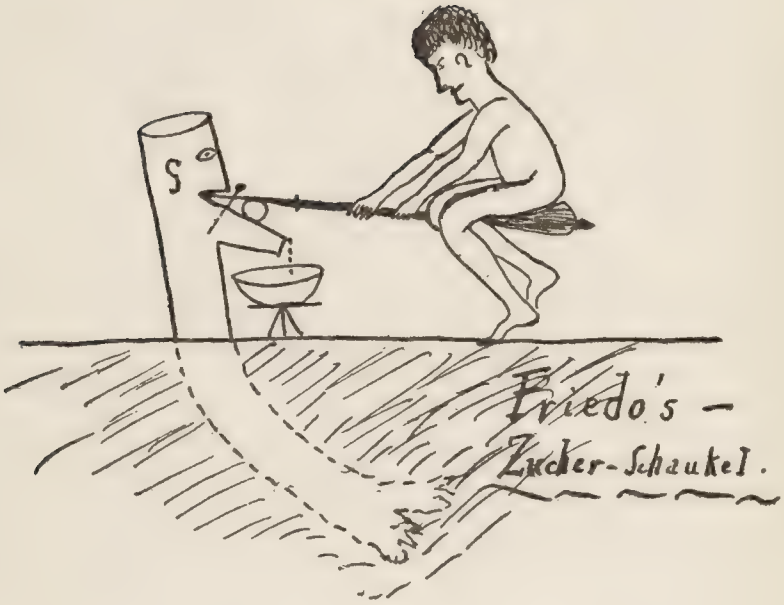
Then he went off again, but he came back almost regularly. One never knew quite when to expect him, so I always kept a good supply of green things ready for him in his stall, in case he should come while we were away. It was most touching to see his joy in meeting us when he came home. As if to convince us that it was not only the good food he came for, he let us hitch him up for transport service eagerly, and never minded how many days we kept him working. He never showed the slightest restiveness or any desire to return to his playmates so long as we needed him.

One day we met our Burro far from home. He was not alone, but had a lady donkey with him from the wild herd. Beside them walked a baby Burro, very solemn and awkward. There was something in our Burro's proud possessive manner and a new air of mature importance that told us plainly he had become a father. I am sure that we were no less pleased and proud than he. His new status by no means prevented his coming to Friedo as regularly as before, but he always came alone.

On the 23d of September, 1931, we began the building of a new house, far more spacious than the old one. We realized that the circular glass house on the high stone foundation would be the labor of years, but a truly roomy dwelling was an immediately feasible ambition, and was no sooner decided upon than put into action. The spot we selected for the original house had proved itself the one most suitable for a dwelling on the ground level, so the new one rose immediately beside the old. This dwindled rapidly into a mere shack as its broad, imposing neighbor took form. The builders were impressed daily with its sense of opulence. It too was wall-less but had a spread of roof six yards square. We had acquired the departing settlers' stock of corrugated iron, and this, together with our own, amply enabled us to cover the large area. The new roof was slightly tilted, to let off the rain; to offset the rare gales, against which the natural shelter of the surrounding thickets were not adequate protection, we had awnings of sail-cloth easily let down for walls. Many acacias and heartwood trees went into the making of the new roof-frame and props. I could not help much with the felling, but did my share in all the rest. The floor was of stamped clay, into which we laid halved bamboo



First-Sketch of Ritters-Home.


Friedo's –
Zucker-Schaukel.

rods. It made a good corrugated surface, very pretty to look at. Eight posts firmly imbedded in the ground supported the roof. These were from the stubby acacia native to the island, and it took us incredibly long to find trees even relatively straight and tall enough for this purpose. The wood was hard and resistant as iron; it was slave's work driving holes into its unyielding surface, and each nail had to be thickly greased before it could be hammered home. But the finished house was well worth all the effort. The roof was so solid that it could safely support the weight of any number of people; and we made use of it as a roof-garden very often.

I don't know which feature of our new home swelled our pride the most—the large screen-cage of insect-proof wire netting where our beds stood, my kitchen with the hanging shelves against the ants, our library with two most comfortable easy-chairs, or our other handmade furniture of beautiful curved sticks. The roof, extending beyond the house, formed a wide veranda, and this we gradually furnished with a large rectangular table and two round ones, five chairs and seven small racks for holding odds and ends. All these things, big and small, were made with our own hands, and without assistance or advice from anyone. We looked upon them as a triumph for two confirmed townsfolk.

But the chief glory of the place, to Frederick's mind, was his device for running water. Using an old pipe salvaged from the scrap-heap outside the Casa, he made a conduit from the natural reservoir in the rock, which I have already described, to a corner near the kitchen. A cartridge-case became a tap; one end was fitted round the pipe, the other, with a finger-wide hole bored in it, emitted a sufficient stream of water controlled by a slide. This piece of plumbing was the admiration of all beholders, and an incalculable boon to me.

Our new house took three months of unremitting toil to build, and when it was finished it was as free, and bright, and open to the air of heaven as I wished our souls to be. We looked at it and found it very good.

But it demanded an appropriate setting, and the next three months were spent, accordingly, in applying a landscaping hand to

too luxuriant and formless nature. To achieve our purpose we had to clear a strip of jungle at the end of our garden. The view repaid its cost a thousand, thousand times with sunsets and sunrises of surpassing beauty, and with the ever-changing picture of the ocean which is the same from æon to æon, and never the same from hour to hour. The far blue coast of Isabella reminded us, according to the mood of the moment, how near we were to our fellow-men, and how far we were from them. Sometimes a trail of smoke on the horizon told of an unseen ship; sometimes we saw a distant sail. But often for as long as half a year the sea stretched away on every side as empty as though it had never been traversed by man. Then we forgot the other dwellers on the island, and gave ourselves up to the joy of utter solitude.

Unfortunately, the strip of land which we had cleared to free the view towards the sea could not be put to any use on account of the impossibility of irrigating it. But the six hundred fence-posts it yielded enabled us to extend Friedo towards the west. This fencing took another six months to complete, working at it intermittently whenever we had a few hours to spare. The posts were a motley collection, some thick as telephone-poles, others, in comparison, as slim as wands. One immense one we set up at the entrance to Friedo and duly christened it "Elephant's Gate" in honor of this mighty pillar.

Chapter XII: TUG OF WAR

I AM NOT GOING TO ADD MY WORDS OF WISDOM ABOUT MARRIAGE to what has been already said and written on this entertaining subject during thousands of years past, but I should like to place on record my opinion that if Adam and Eve were as successful as they are reputed to have been, it was because the human species at that early stage had not yet learned the meaning of mental conflict. I know that there are types of women whose natural submissiveness is so extreme that they put up no resistance of any kind when coerced by some one else's will. They submit to the domination of their husbands as to a force of circumstance which there is no gainsaying. There is much practical wisdom in this attitude, I know, and perhaps it is the one in which the secret of the perfect marriage lies. But I myself was insufficiently endowed with passivity at birth and have never since acquired it. Compulsion of any kind has always offended my sense of freedom, and in conflict with a stronger will than mine I do not yield but fight on, whether I know I have a losing cause or not. This stronger will I found in Frederick. He was so intensely masculine that his whole conception of married life was based upon the principle of woman's subjugation in the earthly scheme.

I think that no one ever loved a man more wholly than I this man. He was for me perhaps more than a man, and nearer to a god. The wide range of his learning, his profundity of thought, the extreme courage with which, unlike almost every other thinker, he dared to carry each idea to its logical end—all made him stand out as a person of more than ordinary stature in a world where there is much thinking and little thought, and too much cowardice in the face of uncomfortable conclusions.

I have said already, but must here repeat, that I felt it to be the greatest privilege and honor of my life that this man chose me among all the many men and women he had known for his single true disciple. It filled me with an endless pride to know that my fundamental likeness to himself was so profound, and I must make it clear that this aspect of our union was largely independent of and unaffected by our love on the human plane. I mean that we should probably have been lovers even had we not shared the

same view of life and gone out looking for the same truths; and we should have been companions in that search even had we never been lovers. I should not dwell on matters as purely personal as these if it were not that the evolution of our relationship is a main element in the story of our life on Floreana. On that island, cut off equally from the disadvantages and the advantages of other human contacts, our marriage problem was a difficult one, though instructive, I dare say, because there was nothing outside ourselves to help us solve it. Even in Germany, our two strong wills had met in many a fierce encounter, but it is one thing to cope with such situations by appearing before one's neighbors and friends as if nothing had happened, or else by going off defiantly to see a moving picture, or even by submerging the annoyance of the moment in the observation of the anonymous and varied life about one in the town; and another, to be without such refuges, alone with your opponent and your fury on a deserted island in the middle of an ocean. Then it is yield or break, or compromise or win, but all without assistance from the outside.

In my tussles with Frederick, I yielded sometimes, and broke once; I won once or twice. But nothing could ever bring me to a compromise; it is not in my nature, and was not in Frederick's, either. The clever and the worldly might laugh at us and call us childish extremists, but we knew that only the absolute is right and worth while in the long run.

Life in the wilderness is rich in lessons most of us never have a chance to learn. It was a source of continual amazement to me to realize how civilization falsifies the lives of men and women, making it forever impossible, even for those who know each other best, to see each other as they really are. On Floreana I saw myself and Frederick for the first time. Here again, on the spiritual and intellectual plane, our lives were as nearly perfect in harmony as could well be imagined, but how great was the disharmony in the sphere of practical and human things!

It is a romantic error to suppose that in the building of our house and the creation of the garden we translated drudgery into terms of spiritual significance. Nothing could be farther from the truth. On the contrary, the ceaseless and excessive manual toil

dulled the edge of our whole spiritual life for me, and spoiled all its freshness. Sometimes at night, reviewing the day that we had just completed, I used to notice in hurt amazement how stupid, petty trifles and meaningless activities had swallowed up precious time, leaving us the gainers by nothing. My lack of skill at manual drudgery was just one of many things leading to Frederick's seemingly eternal dissatisfaction with everything I was and did. Sometimes when I could endure this no longer, and blazed out at him in uncontrollable anger, he would answer that it was only his high ambition for me that made him so. He wanted to see me as something more than other women, and knew that he could make me more if he did not let softness come in and relax the sternness of his education. I had to accept this explanation, knowing it was true, but it did not console me.

It did not even console me to see and hear his pride in me before the visitors who came. When he sang my praises into strangers' ears, I used chiefly to remember with bitterness that none of my achievements, which he suddenly admired so much, had inspired him at the time of performance with a single word of commendation. I will not dwell here again upon what I have already mentioned, namely that every trace of tenderness departed from Frederick's attitude towards me the moment we left home. Not having yet become the kind of super-woman he was striving for, I felt cheated and disappointed at being treated as though I were a man friend. This was the cause of bitter quarrels between us, but my resistance shipwrecked on the rock of his apparent inability to understand my situation or my point of view. After a long time I gave up the struggle and became as indifferent, at least outwardly, as he. In many things I went my own way, and his criticisms and reproaches failed to perturb me any longer. Yet I could not say that I was disappointed in myself for being too ordinary a person, too subject to worldly joys and sorrows, to be the perfect companion of such a man. What moved me most, I think, in all the time of our companionship, was the change that came over Frederick about half a year before he died. No outward circumstance and no advances on my side provoked this, but it was as though certain values he had ignored or underestimated until then came

to take their rightful place in his view of life. And this so happy change was helped by the greater understanding I had gained of him during the long time, when it seemed as though we were almost estranged. Only between two people bound by such bonds as we were, the word "estrangement" had no meaning.

I was tormented by many queer discrepancies in Frederick's unique character. I have already told about the desperate fit of jealousy that seized him one day when we were out with Hugo, and there were many others. For instance, the fierce battles that we fought about my flower garden. There were few flowers on Friedo, and none particularly decorative. I longed to see such favorites of my youth as roses and carnations, dahlias and others, shining against the somber jungle background. I spoke of this to Frederick when we were planting our plantation, and said that I should order seeds from Guayaquil. To my sheer amazement he forbade this utterly. Then I learned that he disliked all things that had no use or purpose in nature, that to introduce such irrelevancies into this place of his ideal would be to flout its whole significance. This objection did not hinder me from gratefully accepting the offer of a kind American visitor to send me some carnation seeds when he got back. When these came, I did not plant them secretly, but Frederick showed me very clearly that he resented, and disapproved on principle, of my defiance.

I was charmed when the first flowers came up. I took the greatest care of them, determined that they should not share the fate of many seeds that we had brought from home, such as radishes and lettuce, which had done wonderfully for a short while and then refused to grow more. I dreamed of a lovely flower garden which would fill my eyes with color and my heart with joy. Then I felt ill, and had to stay in the house for a long time. Between the bouts of fever, I begged Frederick to keep my flowers watered, and the first day I could creep out of doors, my first visit was to the carnation bed. I found it empty. The ragged earth showed where the plants had been torn roughly out of it. Trails of the graceful gray stalks lay forlornly here and there. There was no reason to suspect marauding animals. I knew quite well who had committed this act of destruction. I said nothing, but planted another crop. A similar

end befell it. I then put in a third, and this he left alone. But not in silence. He tried to show me how valueless were flowers, which served no purpose other than foolish decoration, alien to the plan, since nature had not put them there. If I desired flowers, he said, then I should learn to see the beauty in the yellow blossoms of the cotton, and be satisfied with these. I admitted that they too were charming in their brilliant yellow, but insisted that I have my flowers as well. I realized later that Frederick had not meant to deprive me of a pleasure but to help me free myself from the domination of mere wishes and irrational desires. It conflicted with his theory of the conservation of energy to have me spend time, thought and care upon quite outward, unimportant things.

More serious than our quarrel over the flowers was Frederick's invincible objection to my living pets. His jealousy of Burro was extreme. I call it jealousy because there was, in his disapproval, more of this complex emotion than he was willing to admit. Not for his person, but for his teachings, Frederick claimed the absolute monopoly of my intellect and feelings, and grudged the squandering of them on any other thing. And I confess that I spent a great deal of time with my beloved and charming four-footed companions.

I had a family of cats. The mother was that touching pussy we had found wandering disconsolately about the deserted Casa, apparently not able to unlearn domesticity and join the wild cats upon the island. We took her with us, and were very glad to have her, because of the plague of rats at Friedo. It is not every cat that will tackle rats, but Mietzi was a heroine in her way, and kept the fierce intruders at a distance. Though unable to go over to the island cats, Mietzi did not despise a wild lover. Her favorite among her many suitors was a handsome black tom who became the father of a large and lusty family. I adored these kittens, who were much different from the tame variety and far more handsome. I do confess that I spent a great deal of time with them, doing my best to ignore Frederick's disapproval, but this increased to such an extent that I at last had to train the whole family except Mietzi herself to keep away from Friedo and out of sight. Afterwards I kept two of Mietzi's children, partly on account of their useful-

ness. But my friendship had to be carried on with them half in secret, so as not to arouse Frederick to fresh anger.

In a certain way he was justified in resenting the attention I gave at all times to my pets, and in feeling that they had robbed him of that singleness of interest on my part which had been all his before. For example, in the morning hours which he always spent working at his philosophy, he would often call me to discuss a thought, and I would hasten into the house—for he worked only in the "cage," never out-of-doors—leaving whatever I was doing instantly. It is certain that I did not grow less interested in his work, or feel each new thought and idea which came to him any less urgent than before, and I am sure I listened with at least as much eagerness and attention as at any other time. But it would often happen that he called me just as I was in the midst of feeding my animals, and suddenly I would hear one calling sadly for its food. Then I would have a pang of conscience, especially when it was the baby donkey whose mother we had shot. Frederick would notice my divided attention, and resent it bitterly, for to him, with his unswerving faithfulness to the great purpose with which we both had come to Floreana, my apparently incurable attachment to worldly things was a source of grief and disappointment. In his heart he knew that the things of his world were more real and important to me than all else; he could not understand the seeming contradiction in my behavior. I have often reproached myself since then for the justifiable anger I provoked him to at such times. Then there was the never-ending tug-of-war between his self-will and my own, for I could not bear the thought of being coerced, and the drastic system by which Frederick tried to educate me reminded me sometimes all too keenly of my husband, and aroused my most violent resistance.

At such times as these, and they were frequent, the conflict between us would burst out into something most horribly resembling a domestic row with mutual recrimination and fault-finding, just, I am ashamed to say, as in the most bourgeois household in the world. Frederick's not undeserved rebukes on the subject of my domestic inefficiency would burst forth then with pent-up violence, but my life among the Hausfraus of Germany had given me a

hatred of domestic efficiency. I had a horror of the Hausfrau in myself and others, and neither in Berlin nor upon Floreana did I intend to become one. I conceived the plan of having Frederick's wife come out to us. If he thought that my animals took up too much of my time and his, and that for their sake I neglected house and garden, then let her come and attend to these and welcome. I was not jealous. I was perfectly willing to take all the consequences of her presence in one home. But Frederick would have none of it, and in this rejection I felt to a certain extent forgiven and consoled. Nevertheless, I wished and hoped that she would come, and even wrote to her to take the plunge, assuring her she would not be unhappy, and that I, at least, would be glad to have her there.

Meanwhile our mail brought us news that the publicity about us in the German press had proved my worst fears justified. My husband had started proceedings for divorce against me; this showed that the arrangement we had made on leaving (to have Frederick's wife take my place beside my husband) had not worked out and had had to be given up. I could therefore see no reason why Frau Ritter should not come to Floreana, since she had no children to consider, and since I was sure she still loved her husband. But she did not come, and we were, and remained, alone to fight our fight to the end.

But in spite of all our differences, deep-rooted and important as some of them were, we never doubted but that we had been intended for each other, and both of us knew that we could never be parted and live. This deep conviction lent a certain superficiality to even our wildest quarrels, and that is why, although our Eden was no peaceful one, it was an Eden just the same.

Chapter XIII: WE GAIN A FRIEND AND FAIL TO DEFEAT AN ENEMY

THE YEAR 1932 WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE END, BUT NO year could have opened more deceptively. The 3rd of January brought us a friend whom I shall remember all my life with gratitude. The American yacht *Velero III* came to Floreana, commanded by its owner, Captain Hancock, the explorer, who invited us aboard. Unlike most of the visitors to the island, these came to us at Friedo immediately upon their arrival—usually interest in us was incidental, which we sometimes preferred, for it was not to everybody we felt inclined to show our place. Except for Commander McDonald, no one who came cruising to the island showed such sympathetic or intelligent interest in our purpose and ideas as Captain Hancock. In him we found that openness of mind and freedom from prejudice and preconceived ideas, as well as that respect for other people's sincerities, which are among the most likable traits of the Americans. These men, we felt, did not regard us as something escaped from a psychological zoo, but were capable of dissociating what we really were from all the outward peculiarity of our situation. With them alone, of all the kind and interested men and women we met, we felt that we could really talk of our ideas, with the perfect assurance that we were speaking a language they could understand.

When Captain Hancock asked us to the yacht, he did not mention the treat he had in store for us, but I shall never forget the extraordinary and moving impression of that evening—for there was music. Captain Hancock turned out to be an accomplished 'cellist. He played on an instrument whose tone had the most extraordinary beauty I had ever heard. Some one told us afterwards that it was a Gagliano, a priceless example of its kind. There was a young Russian violin virtuoso, and another member of the group of scientists on board played the piano accompaniments. It is very difficult for dwellers in the civilized world today, with the phonograph and radio bringing music continuously into their very houses, to realize what years without music can mean. I myself had not been conscious of how much I missed it until I heard again the

works of those composers with whom all Germans grow up from childhood and whose genius plays so large a part in every German's cultural life. As we sat listening to Haydn and Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, I lost all consciousness of my surroundings, and hardly came back to earth when the rich sounds themselves had died away. It was not that the music made me feel homesick—that is, not for Europe or for the scenes and people with whom it was associated in my mind—but it was as though it led me back into a landscape that was home to me, where I knew everything, and met again many a joy that I had greatly cherished.

Captain Hancock's chief interest in the Galapagos seemed, like Beebe's, to be the fauna of that strange region. We were shown fascinating pictures of giant turtles, dwarf penguins, leguana, and many other creatures native to islands of the archipelago. The *Velero III* differed considerably from the pleasure yachts. It seemed to be equipped for work rather than for mere enjoyment; it had a serious atmosphere. Captain Hancock had heard of us long before he came, and to our astonishment we found that he must have questioned some of our former visitors about us closely, for he was well informed as to certain household deficiencies at Friedo, and had actually brought along a cook-stove of light cast-iron, a gift for which I have blessed him a thousand times. He also brought a rifle for defense against dangerous animals, a much more powerful weapon than the gun we already had. He pressed us to tell him what we needed, and at the moment the only thing that I could think of was flour. Until that time, having no means of making bread, we had substituted bananas for this staple article of food, but variety in eating is acknowledged to be necessary, and an unvaried diet of bananas is apt to be extremely jading after a long time. Now, thanks to Captain Hancock's kindness, we were able to have bread four times a month. When the *Velero* sailed away, I thought with wistfulness of the lovely music that we should probably not hear again. We did not know then that Captain Hancock would come back several times, nor that he had left us the richer for a deep and enduring friendship.

About a month later we suddenly became aware, one day, that visitors had descended upon us. They found us immersed in the

day's labor, and seemed astonished, and even a little amused, at the great earnestness with which we toiled. This time the leader of the party was Vincent Astor. It was his first visit to Friedo, though not to Floreana. We had met him on the occasion of his former call on the island about two years before, but a stupid misunderstanding had marred the pleasure of that first acquaintance. Now that small cloud had quite dispersed, and we met again with mutual cordiality. Mr. Astor was most solicitous for our comfort on the island. He too made us show him everything and tell him what we lacked, but by this time Friedo was astonishingly well-equipped, and actually we had very little to ask for. The time passed charmingly and we enjoyed our return visit to his yacht, the *Nourmahal*. It was a very handsome craft, most lavishly appointed, but I would not have exchanged our Friedo for it for all the world.

Other casual cruisers came and went.

It was about this time that we entered the decisive stage in the fiercest battle of our Floreana career. Our antagonist was no ordinary one. In wits and courage he was at least our equal, and he seemed to bear a charmed life. Of all the visible and invisible forces on the island which set their power against us, this was the one with which we came into the most obstinate open conflict. To every ruse of ours, he had a counter-trick. It was a long duel, and I often wondered afterwards whether we really did come out of it victorious, or whether the things that happened afterwards to our undoing were not of his contriving, notwithstanding the fact that he had by then ceased to exist in the tangible form in which he appeared to us, that of a wild pig of immense size. We called him the "devil boar." I am not sure now that he was a boar, but I am very sure he was a devil—one of the Floreana evil spirits, or perhaps one of those guardians of the island, which seemed to us fiendish only because they resented our intrusion.

The struggle had started as long ago as 1930, when our garden began to flourish with yucca and potatoes, yams and other sweet products, far more palatable to beast and man than the bitter fruit of the acacia. For a surprising time we remained undisturbed by nightly marauders, until suddenly each morning we came out to find our vegetable plots devastated, obviously by some large animal.

We began to lie awake at night in ambush for it, but it never revealed itself. Its black coat was invisible against the blackness of the tropical night.

One evening as I was working in the garden, I looked round and saw what I thought was a black calf. It had just broken through the fence, and I called Frederick to go over and deal with it. As we came nearer, we saw that it was not a calf at all, but a huge boar, and by its evil, depredating eye we knew that this was the thief and ravager of our garden. At that time our most powerful weapon was the rifle given us by Commander McDonald, an excellent one, but not of the caliber required for overcoming devils. Frederick shot at the boar, but, so far as we could tell, with no effect. From so near he could not very well have missed, so we concluded that the bullet had glanced off the creature's body without doing any harm. For the moment, however, we had banished it, and heard it going off through the bush, muttering and grunting, but not in a voice to indicate it had been hurt. The next morning, our garden presented an indescribable picture of destruction. It seemed impossible that only one brigand had been at work. The wild boar must have come with his whole family. Ordinarily our principles stood inflexible against all forms of killing, but in this case we saw that our fight with the wild boar could only be a fight to the finish, and that the best man must win. Having found our gun useless, Frederick now resorted to more subtle weapons, and poisoned bananas with cyankali. This devilish dessert should ruin the devil's appetite for good, he thought, as he pasted a generous portion of the fatal stuff on the so-pleasant fruit.

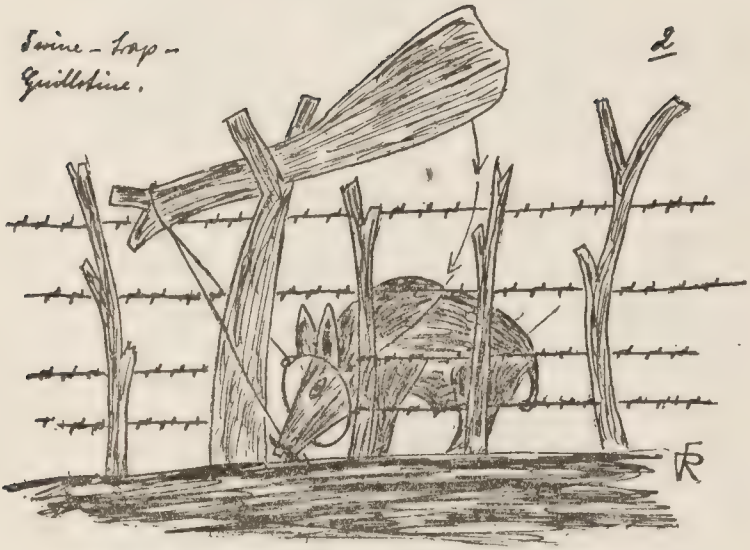
We went outside the following morning with a sense of guilt, feeling that we had used not quite fair methods in the fight against a helpless member of the brute creation, and fully expecting to find either the wicked old monster's corpse where the bananas had lain, or else his tracks leading off into the thicket, where he might have staggered to die. We might have spared ourselves these moral qualms, for there lay the bananas, spurned. The enemy had not taken the bait but had apparently nibbled carefully at it and discovered that everything was not entirely in order. The portion of poison he had consumed might have been enough to kill an ordi-

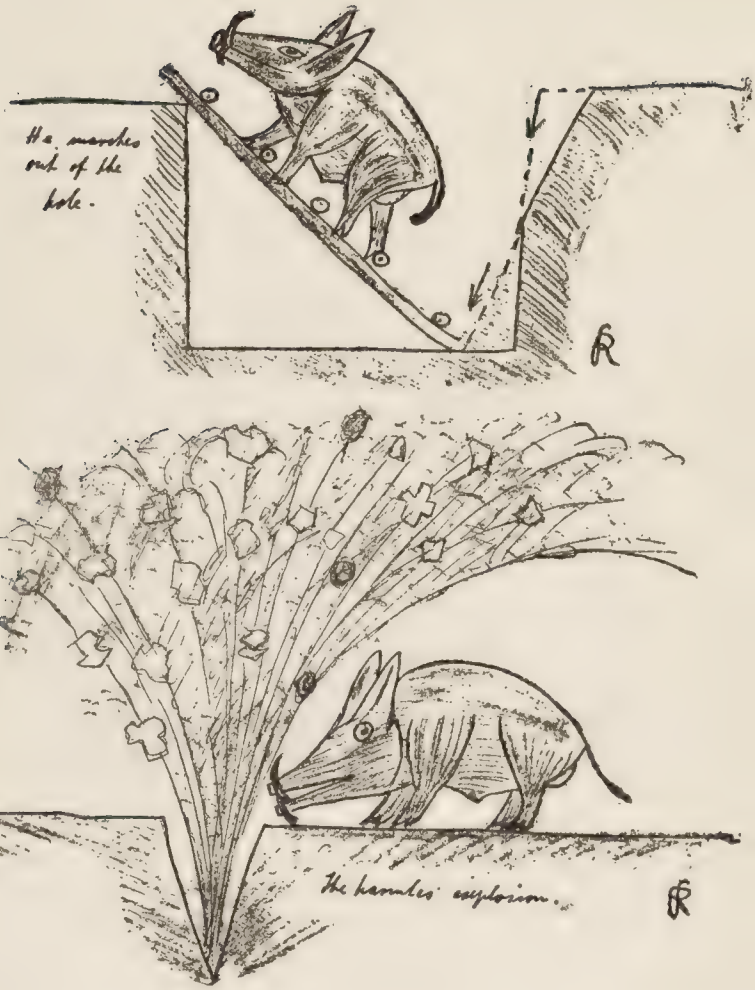
nary pig, but something told us that it would have no effect on this one. And we were right, for shortly afterwards he showed himself to us again, looking the picture of robust, well-nourished health. I could not resist teasing Frederick about the virtue of his tonics, and rearranged a little nursery rhyme to suit the case, which I sang mockingly now and then. This spurred him on to further effort, and his next idea was to lay a trap.

It was a very ingenious affair. He dug a hole large enough to hold an elephant, covering it with leafy branches strewn with gravel, to look like the rest of the surrounding ground. In the middle of this treacherous platform he spread an appetizing meal of yucca. I greatly praised and admired this inspired piece of handiwork, and we slept optimistically through that night. I was so sure that we had caught the wily creature that next morning I went with some wariness with Frederick to the hole, afraid that he might leap out at us. We found the covering of our pit sloped in a gentle incline towards the bottom of the pit, forming a soft and grateful gangplank for the free entrance and exit of any number of prisoners. Not only were the yuccas all gone but the sight of my ruined garden filled me again with fury and despair.

Now I was convinced that the devil-boar was no ordinary animal, but a fiend in beast's shape. I almost heard it chuckling with sinister triumph from among the thickets. Failure drove poor Frederick to a perfect frenzy. He neglected everything else, in order to think out and construct a device which would rid us of this satanic foe. The accompanying sketch is too crude to give an idea of how difficult his guillotine was, both to build and to set up with the means at our disposal. It was really a complex machine, combining a strangulation device with the ax. After innumerable trials, in which it more than came up to its inventor's expectations, we were at last convinced that victory was ours. The block of wood, our dummy, placed against the bait, was duly and inevitably hanged and beheaded the moment the release-mechanism was touched.

This time Frederick was taking no chances. Night after night we sacrificed luscious fruits of our garden to lure the monster to the spot where his fate was to overtake him, but at first harmlessly, so that he would grow accustomed to finding good things


Swine-trap-
Guillotine.
2


He marches out of the hole.
The hamster explores.

there, and get into the habit of trusting in his safety. At last we raised the guillotine, and, from our beds, kept an ear alert for the result. But it seemed that the victim had been warned or had an engagement elsewhere that night, for he did not come at the usual time. Then I went to sleep. The next morning Frederick met me with such an expression of bafflement on his face that I knew immediately we had failed again. He told me how he had heard the boar come, and had gone out with his lantern after hearing, as he thought, the fall of the ax. The ax had fallen but not upon the enemy's neck, and the boar had once again got off scot free—taking the bait with him.

I hardly recognized Frederick in the savage berserker the wild boar had aroused. All the primitive male was aroused in him, and he swore that if he died in the attempt, he would get the best of this devilish adversary. He tried no more traps, for these were obviously useless. The weak gun had proved ineffectual. What could be done? Suddenly he remembered the dynamite!

That night, tastefully concealed amidst a pile of delicacies, lay two cartridges of dynamite ready to be set off by Frederick lying in wait at a circumspect distance, pretending to be asleep. The giant came. It did not take him long to discover the feast, and soon we heard him chewing and grunting in highest satisfaction. Now that we knew that his moments were numbered, we did not begrudge the wise old fellow, the subtle demon and destroyer of our work, his farewell spread. We even felt rather ashamed to be disposing of him in this truly ghastly fashion, and almost feared to set off the charge of dynamite.

The night was shrill with the nocturnal cries of all the island herds. The wild cats screamed and fought at intervals, but nothing disturbed the boar in the leisurely enjoyment of his party. At last the time seemed to Frederick to have come, and he set off the fatal spark. The roar that followed sounded as though all the volcanoes on the island had suddenly erupted in concert, and when the reverberations subsided and the smoke and dust cleared somewhat, I went timorously forward, trying to keep my bare feet well out of the way of fragments of wild boar which must be lying about the place.

Then there came another roar—this time from Frederick. The boar was nowhere to be seen, but that he got away intact was fully proved by the absence of remains. Among the litter left by the explosion, we found some dynamite cartridges. Our guest had taken them for part of the supper we had offered him, had chewed them thoroughly, but evidently found them little to his liking, so had not swallowed them but left them on the ground. The connecting wires of the fuse had been masticated into a tangle round the cartridges.

After this, for a time, both sides called an armistice.

Chapter XIV: SHADOWS BEFORE

I DO NOT KNOW WHY IT IS THAT CERTAIN EVENTS CAST OMINOUS shadows far before, that long before they come about the mind has sensed them and become depressed. So it was with me before the Wittmers came. I could not account for the strange gloom that all at once fell over me, for the weather was perfect, the garden growing well, and Frederick and I were at peace. I sometimes wondered whether the dark presentiment boded ill to Frederick, and looked at him in concern as though to read in his face a sign of what it was that worried me so. But Frederick in those days seemed well and even tranquil, and this was reassurance in itself. And yet—something within me refused to be quieted. With an effort of will, however, I put these imaginings behind me, and determined to take what might come bravely, not meet catastrophe halfway.

One morning very early, we were out on our veranda, enjoying the view across the ocean through our newly cut clearing before Frederick went indoors to work at his philosophy and I went out to look after my garden. Far out to sea we saw a schooner which seemed to be approaching Black Beach, though from that distance we could not be sure. The wind was not favoring its progress, and we could see that the swift Antarctic current was forcing it away. With difficulty, however, it held its course, and we waited and watched it coming slowly nearer. Our whole morning's work was behind us and we had finished our midday meal of egg-nog and bananas when the schooner finally put in safely at our small bay. We discerned a small rowboat which the ship had in tow, and watched this now detach itself and set off, apparently for shore. But to our surprise, hardly had it left than it returned to the ship. Then it put out again. We watched it curiously while it made three of these odd journeys. Frederick said that it was unloading supplies, but as we were too far away to recognize the schooner, we could not tell whether the cargo being landed was for us or not.

Then we suddenly remembered that the crew of another ship, the *Esperanza*, which had touched at Floreana three weeks before, had told us that a German family was enroute to the island, and would very shortly become our neighbors. That both Frederick

and I could have forgotten this shows how little interest we took in the prospect of permanent neighbors. We had by now seen so many come and go that I think we had begun to believe that nobody but ourselves could stand the island for very long.

Now I remembered with a certain pleasure that the prospective newcomers were a married couple. I thought that it would be a pleasant change to have a woman to talk to, and though we might never become great friends (somehow I never became great friends with a woman), still I looked forward to her and hoped that we should manage to agree.

The little rowing-boat made its busy trips to and from Black Beach, and finally returned and was tied up again to the schooner, and we knew that the new settlers must have landed. Frederick went down towards the beach to meet them, thinking that they might need help. We looked upon ourselves as the hosts of Floreana, and were ready to help whoever came there, gladly placing our knowledge of the island at their disposal. I did not go back to my work, knowing that it could not be very long before the newcomers arrived. Indeed, they came much sooner than even I expected. Frederick had met them already a good way up the path from Black Beach. He emerged from the thickets, and I went forward, expecting to greet my future woman friend. She had not come. With Frederick were the padrone of Chatham Island and a man whose appearance struck me as odd to the point of eccentricity. He was a person of middle age, bald and bespectacled. His rather gaunt legs stuck out of a pair of very brief shorts; his bare feet were protected from the thorny undergrowth by nothing more appropriate than a pair of felt bedroom slippers. The charm of his appearance was not enhanced by a several days' growth of stubble on his face. And the finishing touch was a large and clumsy canvas bag which he had bound to his shoulders like a haversack. I confess that I was sadly disappointed at this first meeting with our neighbor Wittmer, and immediately gave up hope of finding his wife a person with whom a friendship would be possible, though I am also willing to admit that to judge a wife by her husband is premature and unjust. Frederick and I behaved as hospitably as we could to this curiously attired person, but it could

not be helped if we showed him somewhat clearly that his get-up had not won our sympathy. He was not stupid, and so soon took his leave.

The Indios, who had accompanied him and the padrone, returned to the ship and Herr Wittmer went down with them to the beach. After a while he returned with his family, and presented a far more agreeable appearance, for he had changed his absurd costume, and came back dressed like a sane human being. He had even shaved. Seeing our astonished looks, he told us that he had really been at great pains to compose a costume that might be likely to appeal to the kind of people he imagined us to be from various newspaper reports he had read. He had calculated that since we were to be close neighbors, it would be wise for him to make a good impression on us in the beginning, so that we might be well disposed towards him and his family. We listened with patience to this explanation, which I report in such detail because it throws a certain light upon these people's character and attitude. Neither the explanation nor the reason for it improved our opinion of Herr Wittmer, though as time went on other things about him did improve it considerably.

His wife, however, impressed me very pleasantly. She looked much younger than she actually was, and had especially attractive eyes. I thought her very touching in her obviously enceinte condition, and wondered what on earth had made her come to such a wild place for a confinement. When I considered the immense and arduous effort which even the simplest housekeeping on this island must entail, I did not know whether to think her a heroine, a victim, or an idiot. At any rate, I hoped that her husband would be as considerate of her as possible. I found myself, strangely enough, full of concern for this woman whom I had known but half an hour, and there was something very pleasant in the feeling. I think I must have been lonelier on Floreana than I guessed, or would have dared acknowledge, even to myself. The Wittmers had come there attracted by the newspaper accounts of us. They too had had reasons—very different from our own—which made it seem desirable to leave the civilized world for four years, they said. They did not tell us why four years, neither did we ask.

It did not take us long to learn that what had influenced their choice of a retreat was not alone Floreana's romantic appeal; the fact that Frederick was a physician, and they would be needing one soon, had been perhaps the chief factor in their decision. They made no secret of this, but Frederick was anything but pleased. He thought it both inconsiderate and impertinent of these utter strangers to saddle us with the moral responsibility for their having come so far, and then to bank so casually upon the conscience of a medical man, and place him in a position where he could not refuse his services. As all these things came out, we were highly resentful of the Wittmers, and would gladly have put them on the next boat bound for Guayaquil. But they had obviously come to stay, and so there was nothing for it but to put as good a face upon the unavoidable situation as possible. They had brought Herr Wittmer's son with them, a lad of thirteen. I thought it a most extraordinary thing for a father to have done, to bring a young boy to a desert island. This circumstance seemed to me by far the strangest in the whole affair, and as time went on I understood it even less.

The Wittmers spent their first night in a tent down at Black Beach, and the following day Frederick showed them the caves at the oasis. We gave them everything we thought would help them to start their lives most favorably on the island, both good advice and many plants and seeds. They seemed to appreciate our good intentions towards them, and Herr Wittmer set to work with extreme energy, wanting to do everything at once. The severest strain put upon my hospitality was when I had to lend them our Burro for their transport. I could not forget that the predecessors of these people had been the authors of all his woes until we found him, and I had often vowed a vow that he should never under any circumstances fall into other hands than ours, as long as he lived. It was therefore with sad reluctance that I lent him, and the way he raced back home that night after his hated journey to the caves of evil memory told an eloquent tale.

The Wittmers did not trouble us as I had feared they might. When the evening came, and the night, one might have forgotten that there was anyone on Floreana but Frederick and me. The

momentary pleasure I felt in the presence of another woman on the island did not last. My feeling had nothing to do with our neighbors personally, but when the unwonted animation of neighborliness once subsided, the strange depression which had weighed upon me just before their arrival returned. It overwhelmed me now so powerfully that I knew they had been in some way connected with it, even when I had not known of their actual existence. I cannot explain this thing, but it was true.

I did not think the Wittmers would stay on Floreana so long as they thought they would. In fact their five young predecessors had seemed more permanent than they. And yet I had never experienced, in connection with those others, a feeling similar to the one which came over me whenever I remembered the Wittmers, and that was almost every moment of the day. I felt that they would never belong, as we did, to Floreana. The reasons for their coming were all wrong. Nor did I have the feeling that these two people belonged together so profoundly that they were independent of their fellows, and needed no one but each other. It seemed quite likely that they might soon depart or even separate, and yet something far down within me spoke a warning. It was as though I heard a voice telling me that through these people, directly or indirectly, some harm would come to us and Friedo. It was as though they would in some way force us off the island. But why and how, I could not even guess. If it was a warning, it had come too late, and we could only abide our destiny.

We had been three years on Floreana, with its volcanoes that suggested violent upheavals of nature and strange doings on earth and in the skies, but nothing of this kind had happened. The climate was so temperate and the seasons changed so evenly that not even the high flood-tides of spring interrupted the general calm. Even the stormwinds and the rains were mild, and if in past ages this island had been the scene of furious outbursts of elemental rage, it must have long since subsided into the tranquillity in which we found it. And yet the sight of the volcanoes and the imaginings their extinct craters awoke in the mind somehow belied the outward peace and made one feel a little unsure. One felt on Floreana

that one trod upon an unaccountable earth, which might some day rebel and turn against one.

One evening—it was the 18th of September, I recall—I watched the sun go down into the still ocean and waited, as I often did, for the swift fall of night. It had been a clear, blue day. When the sunset was especially splendid, I often used to call to Frederick to come and watch it with me, and I did so on this day. We stood together contemplating, with a fascination that never diminished, the play of light and color over the sea. The spectacle was always very short, and when the darkness fell we would go indoors, and read or write and talk together. But we always waited until the very end before we turned our backs upon the wide Pacific seascape.

On this spring evening, darkness did not come. The sun was gone, but all the sky was lit with an extraordinary reddish-yellow glow. The source of the unaccountable radiance seemed to be in the direction of Narborough Island, which lay behind Isabella and was not visible from Floreana. Against the ever-deepening sky, the reflection of great flames upon a densely swarming mass of cloud changed almost every moment, passing through a range of color such as we had never seen before. What was most strange, the glow moved from north to south, so that deep shadows succeeded outbursts of rich fire. Gradually the yellow cloudbank seemed to spread over the whole sky, and a weird light enveloped everything. With that, the entire world of land and sea and sky with which we had grown so familiar suddenly turned into something terrifying and unnatural. We felt as primitive man must have felt, beholding for the first time the sun in full eclipse at noon. One island had burst into eruption—at any moment ours might follow. The strange light now possessed the world. We looked across at Isabella, expecting that another burst of flame and rush of saffron vapors would bring the approaching catastrophe a stage nearer to ourselves. The broad sea lay as calm as ever between us and it, but soon its floor might heave and burst asunder, and turn it to a waste of seething surf. We waited for a tremor of the ground beneath our feet, expecting it at every moment, for we had read that earthquakes usually accompanied eruptions, and we imagined

that the wave would pass through all this chain of islands. We turned and looked at Naranjal, and it looked ominously back at us, still calm but seeming to await a command. We thought the sea might rise up and engulf the island, or sweep the nearer edges of it down into the depths.

We had no doubt whatever but that Friedo would be swept away, for it was but a short half-hour from the coast, and we thought of all the dreams and all the labor which would be destroyed with it. It did not once occur to us, however, to save ourselves by moving off towards the center of the island or to the wide *pampa*, which would surely be the last to be swallowed under. We stayed quite calmly where we were, and though in awe of what might come, we were not frightened, feeling ourselves one with each other, and with the place that we had made. If fate willed that we go down thus in the midst of our experiment, then we were willing and ready to do so, and to bow to a greater wisdom than our own. Except for the day of Frederick's death, I believe that we never felt so bound to one another as at that moment, nor so safely and indivisibly of one mind.

After we had watched and waited almost all night long for what we thought would surely be our end, we lay down to sleep as calmly, as quietly, as on any other night, quite undismayed and undaunted by the thought, almost the conviction, that we should never see another day.

The next morning the sulphurous clouds still overspread the sky towards Narborough, and after sundown the glow came out again. And so it went on for three days. On the 22nd, it seemed to abate, and for the first time I felt that it was possible to draw a breath in clear air again. But all was not yet well.

The sun had lost its shine and had gone pale and sickly-looking. While the eruption had lasted, my depression had given way to a kind of strange calm that had something almost of exhilaration in it. But now this dead sun, hanging over the land, too weak to cast a shadow, filled me with bleakness. All the presentiments of coming evil rushed back upon me overwhelmingly and could no more be banished. There had been no earthquake and, as it turned out,

no eruption, either, for we heard later that the great fire had been caused by the combustion of a field of sulphur deep in one of the volcano's craters. We were safe apparently, and Friedo was unharmed. But something told me that nothing would ever be the same again.

Chapter XV: THE "BARONESS"

HERR WITTMER WAS NOT AN EXCITABLE MAN, NOR WAS HE imaginative. The volcanic eruption had left him quite unmoved. When, therefore, on a bright November afternoon, he came rushing into Friedo in a state of high excitement, we knew that something serious must have happened. His hands were full of mail for us, which he thrust towards us, blurting out an agitated tale about a new batch of settlers who had just arrived. They were on their way to Friedo, he told us, and might be expected to appear at any moment.

We were more interested in what he had brought than in what he said. Every letter had been opened, and looked so much handled that it was clear to see they had been thoroughly read. Some of them lacked envelopes; even my mother's letters to me had been tampered with. Before we could express our indignation at this or even ask how it had happened, Wittmer plunged into a story about a certain Baroness who had come to Floreana with a retinue of men. Two of these were Germans, old acquaintances of ours, and another member of the party was a ship's captain whom we also knew. The lady had a special cavalier, likewise a German, a young man of the name of Lorenz. Wittmer seemed well informed as to the newcomers' plans, and said they had undoubtedly come to stay.

The Baroness, with a detachment of her following, had landed that day at Post Office Bay, and was in temporary possession of the Casa. Immediately on arriving, she had set out for the caves, taking with her letters for the Wittmers and us which had been entrusted to her at Guayaquil. This would account then, I thought, for the state in which ours had arrived, and I decided to send word to Guayaquil immediately, saying that some more reliable courier should be found to bring our post in future. Before we had time to ask for a description of this energetic-sounding person, she had come into sight.

We had seen many people come and go at Friedo, and it had often struck me how the manner of their coming, their appearance, and the way they behaved in the very first moments, were an unfailing index to their characters. So I had come to judge all of our

visitors by this initial impression, which I never yet had had to revise. That was one reason why I always liked to be at hand when people first arrived, even though my work might take me away from them a good deal during the rest of their stay.

The Baroness differed from all the others in that she did not come on foot, but riding on a donkey, with her retinue on foot beside her. She was of rather less than medium height, and platinum blond. Her very wide red mouth, with the rather prominent protruding teeth, was her most conspicuous feature. Her eyes were hidden behind dark spectacles. She wore a kind of workman's overalls with sandals on her bare feet, and a béret sat jauntily upon her head. It was all obviously composed for effect, but was not without a certain artificial charm. If this was a mere Baroness, she certainly behaved as though she were at least a queen. The most assiduous of her courtiers was the young German Wittmer had referred to. He now carefully helped her to dismount, and without waiting for an invitation pulled over one of our deck chairs and settled her solicitously in it. This done, the Baroness "received" me.

I bade her welcome, though somewhat with the feeling that she regarded Friedo more or less as hers already. I pointedly ignored the hand-kiss she evidently expected, by simply shaking hands with her in the ordinary manner. By the slight shade of annoyance which crossed her face, I realized that a duel between us had begun and that the first point had gone to me. This gave me no satisfaction, for I have never had a taste for the type of conflict this implied, a conflict utterly inappropriate on Floreana. The Baroness' manner said, so clearly as to make the words unnecessary, that she meant to fight us for the conquest of the island. Frederick and I were now bound to Floreana by a thousand ties. We felt it ours, but not in the sense of possession. Now, in a flash, this stranger had descended on it, determined to make it hers and subjugate all that she found there to her rule.

With men her means would be seduction, with women the imposing of a personality more sophisticated and imperious than theirs. One's instinct does not deceive one in such cases, but although I am a despiser of hypocrisy, I did not openly pick up the gauntlet the Baroness had thrown down to me but behaved to her

with friendliness, as though I had noticed nothing. At least she was no little bourgeois Hausfrau nor yet a foolish romanticist nor an imitation "seeker of the light." Whatever hidden elements in her nature would come to light in the course of her sojourn on Floreana, I felt that at last, even as an enemy, as she undoubtedly was destined to become, she was a person worthy of one's steel. But there my feeling deceived me badly, as later experience was to show.

The manner of the Baroness, when she had sufficiently recovered from the fatigues of the ride to take an interest in her surroundings, was somewhat that of a distinguished visitor at the Zulu section of a world's fair. She smiled graciously at all our "cunning contraptions," at our romantic house and "marvelous" plantation, and expressed herself enchanted by this idyll in the wilderness, which she had read about and found so interesting. Three years of toil and arduous struggle in this same wilderness had made me hard and honest. The assumed ecstasies, the condescensions and the general artificiality of this caller from the Boulevards could neither impress nor intimidate me. It gave me an added assurance to see that Frederick's impression of her was much the same as mine, though I greatly disapproved of his showing so pointedly that the lady did not interest him. He almost turned his back on her, and gave an embarrassingly deaf ear to the gush she addressed to him. On the other hand, he seemed to enjoy renewing his acquaintance with some of the men. He took the male visitors round the place, all except young Lorenz, who for his part paid small attention to anything or anybody but the Baroness.

She kept him on a short string, never allowing him to wander more than a few yards away from her, and always calling him back with the imperiousness of a spoiled child to render her this and that ridiculous small service. It was "Rudi, take off my glasses for me!" "Oh, Rudi darling, there's a stone in my sandal—get it out for me!" "Oh, Rudi, come and show me how this thing works"—and so forth, all the time that she was there. Each time, with apparently undiminished eagerness and pleasure, he obeyed these foolish demands.

But as I looked at him I could not quite rhyme with all this gigolo behavior some other quality that seemed to be in him. He

looked a mere youth, and until he told us his real age, which was thirty, I took him for not more than twenty-one. He was tall and very graceful, with a slender, well-built figure. His complexion had a youthful freshness, and his very bright blue eyes had something so nice and candid in their expression that he inspired a certain sympathy and confidence, despite the touch of obsequiousness in his manner. Towards us he was pleasant and entirely unaffected. He seemed to come of rather simple people, and his speech betrayed an only moderate education. This seemed inconsistent with his rather over-pretty ways, and made me think that the Baroness must have caught him early, drawn to him perhaps by his good looks, and trained him for the drawing-room.

As I have said before, we never sought the confidence of any of our visitors, and never questioned anyone who came to the island to settle, as to the circumstances of their former lives. Most of them had been reticent in this respect. Not so the Baroness. Before she had been an hour at Friedo she had told us the story of her life—at any rate the version of it which she intended us to know. This was by no means unentertaining, and she had a way of talking which was very attractive. Her voice was particularly pleasant, and she had a most musical laugh. The over-developed dramatic instinct which was to cause so much disaster in the future showed itself now in her all too colorful account of the brilliance of her Parisian life. She was not French except by marriage, but came, she told us, of an illustrious Austrian family. It enhanced the charm of her story to hear it told in the light and graceful Austrian German. As we went round the garden, the Baroness was loud in her complaints of the ship's food which they had had to endure on the voyage over, and Lorenz added with a tragic air, "Yes, it was terrible—Madame could eat nothing!" She had lost over a stone in weight! I told her that we did very well on Floreana fare, but she protested that this would be impossible for her, and she would have to import everything from the mainland.

My Burro broke into the conversation with noisy demands for a meal, and I went to fetch his dinner. Lorenz politely accompanied me, and it struck me with what extreme caution he replied to my few very natural questions about the Baroness. It could not escape

me, as we returned, that she looked at him in sharp and menacing inquiry, but an almost imperceptible shaking of his head seemed to reassure her. This little scene was played in one short second, but it was eloquent.

Meanwhile the sun had been nearing the horizon, and daylight would not last much longer. The party could not hope to return to Post Office Bay before dark, and at night the way was dangerous and by no means to be attempted by newcomers. We therefore offered the party our hospitality for the night and this they gladly accepted. Our hand-made mattresses, stuffed with banana leaves, and a blanket or two would solve the sleeping problem for the men, but I was at a loss to know how our primitive dwelling could furnish worthy sleeping accommodation for so fastidious a guest as the lady. We hung a hammock for her, and made it comfortable with a mattress covered with a length of muslin still remaining from the stock I had brought with me from Europe. Our household was not arranged for entertaining on so large a scale, and it took some managing to provide them all with bedding. Fortunately we could place our own at their disposal, for Frederick and I were not going to sleep at all that night. The ship was returning to Guayaquil and some of the party would take back letters for us, so we meant to spend the night writing to our friends and family, and answering the mail we had just received.

Our guests retired very early, worn out, for like all newcomers, they found the first days on the island something of a strain. Frederick and I addressed ourselves to our correspondence, glad of the quiet after so much chatter.

We had rejoiced too soon. In the small hours of the morning the Baroness began to turn restlessly in her hammock. A slight cough troubled her. It seemed quite unimportant, and we thought it called for no special attention. But I wondered silently whether the devoted Lorenz would be roused by so slight a symptom of his lady's discomfort, and hasten to her side. However, he slept a wholesome sleep, and did not stir.

Very soon the slight cough grew rapidly worse. The Baroness began to bark in a most alarming way. But it was no cough, only an hysterical imitation of one. Through Frederick's practice I had

gained some close acquaintance with hysteria, so that when I saw him writing on so imperturbably I knew that he was doing exactly the right thing, and that, inhospitable as it seemed, I too should take no notice. I had remarked earlier in the evening that the Baroness was extremely put out at finding herself displaced as the center of attention, for the men showed the greatest interest in Frederick's conversation, and had eyes and ears for little else—certainly not for the lady's presence. The cause and intention of this present outbreak were clear to see, and we decided to let it rage itself out. But it was not long before Lorenz awoke and went to her. The five years he had spent with her had trained him thoroughly, and he had neither the strength of will nor the independence to withstand her caprices. We heard them whispering, and were not surprised that the cough suddenly ceased, except for an occasional expedient outbreak.

Just as I was wondering how the comedy would continue, Lorenz came hesitantly to the door of the "cage" and asked, clearly embarrassed at disturbing us at that time of night, whether we could make Madame a cup of tea, because she was absolutely frozen. I said that I was very sorry but this could not be done, for the fire was out and could not easily be lit again in the middle of the night. When this message was conveyed to the pseudo-patient, she gave a most convincing imitation of a person in the worst throes of ague. By this time she had succeeded in waking everybody. It was undoubtedly cold, but coldest of all for Frederick and me in our thin clothes and without a blanket between us. I left my writing and fetched all our sacking as added covering for the Baroness. When she saw that this was all the medical treatment she was going to receive, that the remaining audience was quite too tired to be interested and she had exhausted the moment's possibilities, she went to sleep again and gave us no more trouble. But I could write no more. The performance I had just witnessed and the whole personality of the Baroness showed me with terrifying clearness that trouble had come with her to Floreana, and would not cease while she remained. I had a hope, and even a belief, that the rigors of existence in the wilderness would frighten her away. But no second sight showed me the tragedy that lay in store.

My dark forebodings for our future occupied me till the dawn, and as soon as the sky began to show the first signs of day, I went outside to prepare a warm breakfast for our guests. This was not easy, for there were more of them than my kitchen could possibly cope with. I tried, however, to concoct them an agreeable meal. The others ate with relish everything I set before them, but the Baroness hardly touched a thing, but put my laboriously prepared dishes away from her with an expression of distaste. Immediately after breakfast the whole party set out for Post Office Bay.

The departure was not a peaceful scene. One of the men, on leaving, turned to Frederick and said how glad he was to have seen and talked with him again. He had wanted above all things to do this, for, he said, "To come to Floreana without seeing Dr. Ritter would be like going to Rome without seeing the Pope." This cordiality and admiration seemed to incense the Baroness, and the fury she displayed made me really wonder for the first time, though by no means for the last, whether she bore her title by right, so little trace was there in her behavior of her having been even moderately well brought up. This doubt so bothered me that I even mentioned it to one of the men. He laughed and answered, "Oh, none of us believe the title's genuine."

It did not soften my impression of these people to see the way in which they treated their donkey. Its back was very sore, but this did not prevent their saddling it again. In addition to this, they tied a rope around its nose like a muzzle, so that it might not waste time by cropping food along the way. Frederick went with them down to the Bay, and I was left behind alone. I watched the Baroness go away as I had watched Frau Wittmer, sadly convinced that now no woman friend for me would come to Floreana. It was a long and melancholy day, and I waited with impatience for Frederick to return. He came back very grave. He too had felt that no good would come of this new thing. The new arrivals' equipment had proved to him that they expected, and were, in fact, determined, to make a long stay.

We talked about them far more earnestly than we had ever done about our other neighbors. The advent of these people seemed strangely full of menace, and my own presentiments were con-

firmed by Frederick's most unusual depression. At Post Office Bay he had met the rest of the Baroness's party, and the encounter had not been reassuring. One was a very young man named Philippson, who seemed to be the temporary husband of the Baroness. The other was an Ecuadorean, also very young, who had come on contract to the island, having hired himself out to them in Paris in order to get home again. There was something about all this that disturbed us painfully. It was in one way so trivial and theatrical and frivolous, and in another way so sinister. I felt a misgiving, and a revulsion that was close to fear. Frederick, almost to my surprise, this time showed sympathy and understanding for my human weakness, and heartened me. "In any case," he said, "we can only wait and see."

Chapter XVI: THE BARONESS TAKES POSSESSION

IT WAS TWO DAYS LATER, AND WE HAD SEEN NO MORE OF THE newcomers. We were pleased at this and hoped that they would remain the most distant of neighbors. On this morning, as I was working in my garden, young Lorenz appeared. He looked very hot and tired. He stopped at the edge of the plantation and called to me, and I left my work to ask him what he wanted. I found that he had with him two cows and a calf and several donkeys, badly overloaded with heavy packing-cases. He was taking them up to the caves, he told me, which was where the Baroness had elected to have her house built. These animals were only part of the livestock she had brought over from the mainland; there was besides a perfect flock of ducks and hens, turkeys, rabbits, and pigeons. The agreeable young man told me all about this while he rested awhile, and refreshed himself and the thirsty animals with water from our spring. He was all apologies for intruding on my time, but he had only lost his way; having come to an impossible stretch of thicket which he could get neither round nor through, he had come over to ask us to put him on the right path. I told him the way to go, and he took leave with many pleasant words of thanks. We had not mentioned the Baroness.

Another few days went by with our peace undisturbed, and then it was Herr Wittmer who burst in on us, in a fury. Since his announcement of the Baroness's arrival we had not seen him, and so had no idea whether the two households had struck up a friendship or not. He had seemed so agreeably excited at the others' coming that I expected them to form a close alliance. Therefore it had not surprised me when Lorenz said that the oasis at the caves was to be the site of the Baroness's future residence.

To judge by Wittmer's present mood, the mutual friendliness had suffered a slight hitch. Indeed, the poor man was brimful of indignation, for the Baroness's henchmen had calmly come and pitched a tent close up against his spring. If they had asked permission, it might have been granted them, at least for the time being, until they found a suitable place to settle, but the brazen insolence with which they had camped on Wittmer's claim enraged

the man. True, no one acquired land on Floreana by purchase, sale being contrary to the practice of the Ecuadorean government, but it was understood that the spot where one settled and cleared the jungle was one's own, an assumption which had always been respected, even before our time upon the island. This is indeed the immemorial custom with all new land. But laws, written or unwritten, meant nothing to the Baroness. She had not attended the pitching of the tent, but had sent Lorenz and the Ecuadorean, whose name was Valdivieso. Wittmer spoke with greater contempt of Lorenz than of the other, whom he seemed to regard more as the hired man of the party, whereas Lorenz and Philippson were both undoubtedly, so he assured us, the woman's lovers.

He had ordered them to remove themselves from his property and find another spring to settle near, but Lorenz had merely laughed and referred him to the Baroness. For reasons of his own which we did not inquire into, Wittmer had not accepted this challenge, but decided it would be much wiser to do nothing. He did not for a moment believe that Floreana would harbor these people long. He regarded the whole excursion as the whim of a spoiled and foolish woman, which would soon pass, and then we should be rid of them.

He told us that, besides the farmyard, they were transporting no less than seventy hundredweight of cement to the caves, which certainly indicated an intention to build a solid house, but even this Wittmer made light of, never believing the house would be built. He even had plans for using the cement when they had gone and left it behind. He had long envied Frederick's clever irrigation system, where the water ran through clay channels, and wanted to copy it himself. Frederick and I by no means shared Wittmer's optimism, but we said little at the time. I remarked that I was very sorry for the unfortunate animals and fowls the woman had brought with her, for it would be practically an impossibility to bring them through the long dry season, then about due. In a drought it was even difficult for me to keep one donkey and a few fowls adequately fed, and then I could do so only by drawing on stores laid up especially against emergency. Wittmer asked us if he could count on our support as older settlers on Floreana, in case the

Baroness should take too high a hand upon the island, but we, though assuring him of our neighborly sentiments towards him, said that we would on no account allow ourselves to be drawn into any dispute or conflict whatsoever. We made it clear to him that we had come to Floreana to escape those very things and that the only "right" we would put up any fight for would be that of our own seclusion. I felt that Wittmer was somewhat disappointed at this, for he left immediately. If he had any further difficulties with the usurpers, he did not trouble us with them. At any rate, not for some time.

As the dry season reached its height and the water of the spring receded, our plantation claimed constant labor and attention. The fertility of the soil had not maintained itself into a third year, and all our fruit and vegetables were coming up either very poorly or not at all. We had to start over again with the toilsome carting of good ground from far away. Once transported, it had to be sifted and fertilized. This meant much gathering of leaves, which we then allowed to molder, and Frederick had to take his wheelbarrow every day to gather cattle-dung from the watering-place outside our boundary. The garden at Friedo could never be left to take care of itself, especially in a season like this. We had to be so economical with the water that we could use it only for the plants that were hardest to raise. These we watered daily with a hand-pail. With all the other work, this was almost more than I could manage, and Frederick very often helped me, putting his own work aside to be done later. This might seem a trivial and obvious service for Frederick to render me, but in reality it meant a great sacrifice, for it must not be forgotten that his own share of our common toil occupied him almost all day, and whatever extra time he gave to helping me he had to steal from his studies and his writing.

So long as it was not thrust upon him, Frederick simply remained oblivious to the Baroness's presence on the island. But I did not. I could not rid myself of the feeling that our struggle for existence, a struggle which we had for the most part won in fair, if arduous, fight against the harshness of the island, was now about to become a battle of another kind. For even if she were to remain but one

short year—that had been Wittmer's guess—I knew that she was certainly not the type of person who would ever let herself be either forgotten or overlooked. She loomed enormously over the place, and in whatever direction one's thoughts roamed, they fetched up, somehow or other, at the newest settlement and its domineering spirit.

One night we were aroused from sleep by voices calling loudly. We got out of our beds in some alarm, and lit the lamp, for there was no moon to show us who our nocturnal visitors were, and we did not recognize their voices. Two Indios stood outside, courteously refraining from entering our unwalled house unless we should invite them. I recognized them at once as employees of one Christian Stampa, a Norwegian fisherman of Santa Cruz. Their master was a good acquaintance of ours, an amiable and obliging man, who often came to Floreana on hunting expeditions. He never left without calling on us to ask if there was anything he could do for us, and inquire how we and Friedo were flourishing. We knew enough of superstitious Indios to guess that only something very disturbing and unusual could have induced these two men to go anywhere upon the island after dark. Hugo was not the only one who had known the place was haunted; this was the firm belief of all the Indios up and down the coast of Ecuador. It was difficult to get them to go ten steps inland on our island after dark, even with a white man to protect them, and as for making the whole trip to Friedo by themselves, this was something altogether unheard of.

Wherever they had come from, they must have made for us as though fiends were after them, for they were still so breathless that they could hardly speak. We asked them in, and made them sit down and tell us what the matter was. Instead, they instantly began to bombard us with the wildest questions, helter-skelter, hardly waiting for an answer. Needless to say, the questions all concerned the Baroness and her men. But we could give them little information. At last we got the story out of them. Stampa had arrived in Post Office Bay that evening, intending, as usual, to spend the whole of the day on the *pampa*. To their surprise, the party found strangers gathered on the beach, a woman with three men, and before Stampa and his friend knew what was happening these

people had called out and forbidden them to land. They paid no attention, but beached the boat and stepped ashore. The woman then detached herself from the group and came over to them. She asked them what they wanted, and how they dared to land when she had forbidden it. Stampa, who had had experience with some of the other ephemeral settlers on Floreana, thought that this was one like the rest, only a little madder. He answered politely that he was in the habit of coming over now and then for a day's hunting of the wild cattle on the *pampa*. At this the woman burst into a terrific fury and commanded Stampa and his men to return instantly to their ship. Stampa laughed, and this sent the lady into a paroxysm of rage such as the Indios had never beheld in all their lives. With violent and dramatic gestures she yelled at them that the island was now hers with everything upon it. This seemed to interest their master, the Indios told us, and he asked whether we were still at Friedo, and what had become of the other couple at the caves. The mistress of Floreana informed him that we were still there, since she had given us permission to remain, at least for the time being. She had also so far tolerated the Wittmers. She did not mind the people who were there already, but had no intention of allowing anybody else to come, except with her express permission. Stampa did not quite know what to think of all this, and was moreover much annoyed to find this stranger quartered with her men at the Casa, where the hunting party was in the habit of spending the night before their expeditions. But the woman behaved so wildly, the Indios reported, that their master thought it best not to argue with her further, and so went back to the ship to sleep. The Indios were frightened and wanted to go back with him and his friend, but he sent them up to Friedo to find out from us what it all meant. The Baroness and her men tried to prevent this too, but the Indios got away and, in spite of their terror, arrived safely with their message.

There was not much left of the night, but we gladly put them up, and they gratefully accepted our hospitality.

Frederick was inclined to make light of the matter, but I was horrified. As I have said before, we neither felt that we possessed the island or any part of it, nor did we desire to do so. We had

been happy in the thought that property, in the ordinary sense, was no element at all in this better life which we had found, and if anyone had asked us whether we felt that Friedo was "ours," we would certainly have answered both "yes" and "no." Now, however, as we heard that we were there only by the grace of a person suddenly appeared from nowhere, who had neither bought the island nor established claim to any spot upon it by virtue of decent, honest work, I was filled with indignation. I knew that it would be contrary to Frederick's principles actively to defend even Friedo against encroachment, but that night I became conscious for the first time of the meaning of patriotism, and would have held our place to the death against invaders.

Early next morning I gave the Indios breakfast, and they set off for the *pampa.* They had instructions to wait for Stampa and his friend at the fork of the path, one branch of which led to Friedo and the other to the caves and the *pampa* plain. The night's rest and our reassurances seemed to have cured them of their fear of the wild strangers, and they went off quite cheerily. But I watched them go with gravest apprehension, which Frederick did not share. I told him I believed that he was being unduly optimistic, for the Baroness was revealing herself as a person whose love of sensation would stop at nothing. Frederick answered that she was undoubtedly a far-gone case of hysteria, and I wondered whether he was not a little more alarmed than he admitted, especially when the late afternoon came without the customary visit from the hunters. We waited supper until late, but still they did not come. We told each other that very likely they had hunted longer than usual, and then had had so much to do getting the carcasses down to the shore that there was no time left to call at Friedo. But neither of us believed that this was really so.

Next morning we were awakened by frantic shouts. We strained our ears to catch the direction from which they came and found, to our surprise, that this was not from the path, but from the pathless south side of the garden. Something was certainly very wrong. We threw on some clothes and ran outside. To my speechless horror I saw Stampa reeling and staggering towards the house. His clothes were torn to ribbons, there was not a vestige of sleeve

Courtesy of Prof. Vögeli, Zürich

Dr. Ritter, Two Months Before His Death

Courtesy of W. Böckmann, Berlin

"Our Eden Was no Place of Rest"

Courtesy of W. Bockmann, Berlin

It Was an Immense Labor to Lever Out the Huge Lava Rocks'

Courtesy of W. Böckmann, Berlin

"Applying a Landscaping Hand to Luxuriant Nature"

Courtesy of G. Allan Hancock Expeditions. Taken by W. Charles Swett

Lorenz in the Garden of the Baroness

The Garden. At the Left is the Roof of the House

Dr. Ritter and Dore Strauch at Friedo

Courtesy of G. Allan Hancock Expeditions. Taken by W. Charles Swett

The Wittmer Family

Courtesy of G. Allan Hancock Expeditions. Taken by W. Charles Swett

The Baby Donkey, Fleck

Courtesy of G. Allan Hancock Expeditions. Taken by W. Charlet Swett

"The Acacia Props Began to Put Forth Shoots"

The Baroness, Philippson and Lorenz

"Visitors Found Us Immersed in the Day's Labor"

Courtesy of G. Allan Hancock Expeditions. Taken by W. Charles Sw[illegible]

When Guests Came, the Problem of What We Could Give Them to Eat Out of was Quite a Problem"

Courtesy of G. Allan Hancock Expeditions. Taken by W. Charles Sweet

The Baroness and Philippson at Post Office Bay

Courtesy of G. Allan Hancock Expeditions. Taken by W. Charles Swet

Dore Strauch Saying Goodbye to the Grave of Dr. Ritter

Courtesy of G. Allan Hancock Expeditions. Taken by W. Charles Swet

Dore Strauch on Board the *Velero*, Homeward Bound

left in his shirt, and his arms were scratched and bleeding. By the deep, bleeding gashes in his hands I knew he must have fallen often on the sharp lava stones. Innumerable scratches crisscrossed on his back. His face was set like iron, and white and drawn as though from superhuman exertion; his breath came in sobbing gasps. He was completely at the end of his strength, and literally fell into our arms. We helped him in, and while Frederick was attending to his many injuries, I brewed him some hot tea. When he had regained his breath, and had rested and refreshed himself a little, he told us the following tale.

They had shot two calves at the *pampa's* edge close to the caves, and this small bag sufficed them. They skinned them on the spot, and leaving the hides behind, the Indios got the carcasses down to Post Office Bay in good order, and were about to put them into the rowing-boat, when the woman of the night before appeared upon the scene. With her were an Ecuadorean and a man who seemed to be her husband. They all had guns. They demanded to know where Stampa had shot the calves, and insisted upon being shown the hides. He said that they were free to go and look at them themselves, if it interested them, but that it was none of their business. Before the two Norwegians knew what was happening, the Baroness and her companions had seized the Indios' guns. She then said that they could either show the hides or pay for shooting cattle which belonged to her. She had brought so-and-so many head over from the mainland and they were up near the caves.

If Stampa and his friends had been amused the night before, the repetition of the comedy distinctly palled upon them. Moreover, they began to think that these people were really mad, and might be dangerous. Stampa told them, he said, that they could go to hell, and bade the Indios continue with their work. The next thing he knew was that the Baroness had trained her rifle on him, whereupon he thought it best to humor her, and said that he would go and fetch the skins. It was his intention to do no such thing but to come to Friedo and consult with us as to the most advisable method of procedure. But he had not reached the first lava field before he saw the Ecuadorean sneaking up behind him at a distance with his rifle. It was by no means a pleasant situation for Stampa, who

regretted a thousand times having put his own gun in the boat before the performance with the Baroness began, so that he was now unarmed. Fortunately, the time of day was in his favor, for the rapid dusk had fallen and it would soon be too dark for the Ecuadorean to shoot to any purpose. By keeping carefully to the edge of the lava field where the bush was very dense, Stampa, who knew the island well, managed to seize an opportunity to slip into the thicket and evade his pursuer.

It had taken him all night to get to Friedo. We asked him why he did not wait till daybreak, instead of risking that murderous way alone and in the dark, and he answered that there was no knowing but that this woman had a perfect army on the island, planted at various points, and he had therefore preferred to avoid all the paths. He had lost his bearings and had only reached his destination by a miracle, he said.

This story shattered even Frederick's calm, and as for me, I could hardly grasp it. Sadness and revulsion overwhelmed me, and sorry though I was for poor Stampa, I wished that he would go. I felt that at that moment I could not bear the sight of any stranger's face at Friedo. Frederick suggested that Stampa should return without delay, because his friend would be in great anxiety on his account. But he so flatly refused to go another step unarmed and alone that it was plain to us he had not exaggerated his account of what had happened, for we knew him as a man of considerable courage, by no means easily intimidated. He would certainly have taken up the issue with any normal adversary, but he was firmly convinced that the people at the Bay were a party of homicidal maniacs, more in Frederick's line, he said, than his, as doctors no doubt knew how such folk could be dealt with. Frederick was quite willing to go along with him—I think I never knew so fearless a man as Frederick Ritter—and they went off, taking our two guns which, though only light caliber, were better than nothing. Frederick also took a first-aid outfit, since there was no knowing what might have happened to Stampa's companions in the meantime.

Frederick by no means thought the Baroness was mad. He was angry at having his quietude disturbed by her theatricals, and ex-

pressed the opinion that if she had a single proper man with her, instead of a lot of servile gigolos, she could be kept in order without trouble. I too did not think that she was mad, but that she was a violent and treacherous person, who would end by doing us all great harm.

Frederick and Stampa were just about to set out when the latter's friend arrived, unharmed and bearing reassuring news. The Baroness's men had been up at the caves and found her own calves alive and well, whereat she graciously agreed to make no further trouble for the huntsmen. But Stampa had had enough. Knowing that there was now no danger for the other man, he asked him to go back and bring the ship round to Black Beach. There was no landing-place there, however, so his friend said that he would pass by the Wittmers' and borrow the skiff which Wittmer kept down at Black Beach. Herr Wittmer came to Friedo to fetch Stampa and they went together to the beach. When they were gone, I scanned the ocean anxiously for a sight of the Norwegians' boat coming round to the beach.

Frederick and I had a piece of heavy work to do that afternoon; we had to move a boulder of more than usual size. But my attention was only half on what I was doing, and I became more and more alarmed as no sign of either Wittmer's or the fishermen's ship appeared. Was there some fresh trouble? After a long time I saw the gleam of paddles far out to sea, making slow headway against the current, and at last Wittmer landed at the beach. He came back by way of Friedo, and told us that he had had to go all the way to Post Office Bay instead of meeting Stampa's ship on the way because there was no breeze. Down at the Bay he had talked to the Baroness, who had not mentioned a single word about the whole affair. He had with him the Guayaquil newspaper. Its front page carried a sensational interview with the Baroness, filled with all manner of alluring details about herself and her plans, the whole topped with enormous headlines. By the way Wittmer delivered it to us, we could see that he had been commissioned by her to do so, and to see that nothing of the story escaped us. If I had seen an article like this while I was still in Europe, I should not have remembered it longer than a day, but I think

that I shall never forget that account of the extravagant and fantastic woman's dreams and intentions, so tragic and ironical in the light of what they brought her to.

We learned that she was going to build a handsome hotel on Floreana, turning our island into a sort of Miami. American millionaires would be her guests, Ecuadorean trade would prosper by the boom. Towards the Wittmers and all the other people who had come to Floreana, attracted in various ways by the newspaper accounts of Friedo, we had always felt a certain responsibility, however indirect. But in this case we had no such sentiment. We were in fact disgusted at this profit-making plan; the presence of this business-woman and her fellows cast a kind of blight upon our whole idea. My only hope was that the plan would never reach fulfillment, but that its impracticability would frighten the Baroness away before she had time to distort the whole of life on Floreana. I prayed that things might turn out so, for the day the world and its sordidness reached our island would be the day when we must leave it.

Chapter XVII: THE BARONESS WINS ME ROUND

Encouraged by Frederick's imperturbability, I too resolved to put the Baroness and her doings out of my mind. Just as I should have defended Friedo from her attack, so I began to muster all my inner forces to barricade my peace of mind against her. But after a short while I had to realize that my defense could not take the form of absolute aloofness. Incidents too slight to tell of here kept recalling her to us, forcing her upon our notice in a hundred ways. The weekly visit from Herr Wittmer was in itself a means—whether she knew it or not—of dangling her perpetually before us. I fought many a losing fight against my interest in this woman, which kept reviving whenever I most sincerely thought that I had killed it. She came to be almost the chief object of my thoughts, and my imagination enlarged her to a figure almost as formidable and sinister as the notorious Watkins, who, like herself, had once claimed ownership of Floreana, enslaving all the men upon the island. I sometimes wondered whether this Baroness was not a kind of reincarnation of that awful man, in league with the inhospitable spirits of the island, and brought there by what mysterious ways I know not, for the purpose of our undoing.

Unasked and undesired, Lorenz became our frequent visitor. The first of these calls he paid not long after their arrival, and remembering what I had noticed on the first day, since when I had not seen the Baroness again, I was greatly astonished that he dared to come alone. We had heard from Wittmer that strange doings were afoot up at the Baroness's. He seemed alternately indignant and contemptuous at the way in which the woman ordered the three men about, and their extreme docility infuriated him. The only one of them who seemed to be showing a certain restiveness was the young man Lorenz, he told us, but since it was with Lorenz that he had had his first brush with the Baroness's party, he was very glad that that young man came off worst.

The day that Lorenz came he was all out of sorts, and angry and dejected. He threw himself into one of our deck chairs, and remained quiet for a long time as though relishing the peace and

silence. I wondered whether he was ill, but he said that there was nothing the matter with his health. My other questions he answered with a curious distraction, as though his mind was busily engaged with something else. His pleasant, graceful manner was the same as on the first day, but his smile was gone. I did not care to force him to talk, so left him to his very unblissful meditation and went off to make otoy cakes. I remembered that on his first visit he had said he liked them so much. After we had eaten, he thanked me most profusely for this really insignificant kindness, then all at once burst out into a bitter protest against his life upon the island.

He would do anything, he said, if he could only get away, but this was quite impossible. If the Baroness were a slave-driver, she could not be more ruthless and inhuman than she was to him. She was working him to death and treating him worse than an Indio. Her despotism had become absolutely intolerable, and the least hesitation in carrying out her slightest order led to scenes of unimaginable fury. It was not as though she gave one a piece of work to do, and kept one at it until it was finished. On the contrary, no sooner had she thought out one task than another occurred to her, and now this must be done and the first one left lying. Then she would suddenly remember the first one, and fly into a passion because it was not finished. It was wearing his nerves to shreds and he could stand it no longer.

"You don't know what I have to endure," he said. "I have no great pretensions, but no man with an ounce of decency would put up with what she expects of me. She knows that I'm beginning to rebel, and so she's put that fellow Valdivieso to watch me whenever we work up at the caves. He's terrified of her, and carries on as if I were a convict. He never lets me out of his sight, and he's sharper than a lynx. He bosses me around, so that it's all I can do not to take whatever tool I'm working with and brain him. She's got him doing something else now, and that's how I could slip off, but there'd be all hell loose if she found out where I'd been."

I thought I had never seen a person so humiliated, and sympathized with his truly abject distress as keenly as I condemned the

weakness which placed him in so abominable a situation. I had the impression that this unfortunate young man had never spoken of his woes before to anybody, for now they came out of him almost involuntarily, as though a pent-up flood had at last been given vent. He spoke of Philippson. This man had apparently replaced him for the time being in the Baroness's affections, but still she had no thought of letting him, Lorenz, go. For she had had him too long at her beck and call, and knew that he was still her slave. This lover, Lorenz told us, enjoyed every consideration, and was hardly ever put to work. He might choose his tasks and drop them in the middle if he chose, for the others to finish. If he appeared to work as hard as they, it was only in short spurts, in order that the Baroness might hold him up to Lorenz mockingly, as an example.

"I want to go. I don't care where to—anywhere will do," he said. "But what is there for me elsewhere? I've not learned any trade and I've no money." He said this all so plaintively, and looked so young, that one was sorry for him, as though he had been a child. His hands were cut and bruised. They were well-kept hands, and had certainly never known manual work before; altogether one could not associate this boy with rough and primitive existence. I thought of the frightful stretch of ground from Post Office Bay to the caves, remembering what suffering it had been to us, and I was filled with pity for him. The thought of his being put to start a plantation seemed to me positively brutal. I did not press my sympathy upon him with many words, but was glad to see that he felt it.

There could be no doubt that all was not quite open and aboveboard with the Baroness's patent of nobility, nor was her past history without mystery, for, often as Lorenz came down after this first time, he never let himself be drawn into revelations touching these topics. Nevertheless, I felt positively that he knew all about her and could have betrayed her secrets if he had chosen. Whatever was the reason for his discretion, I respected him for it, for one thing was very clear to me, and that was that this woman could sooner have endured to be branded as a criminal than as the fraud she probably was. I thought it very loyal of this young man,

who certainly had a justifiable and bitter grievance, that he never, by a look or the vaguest insinuation, gave her away.

But much was to be learned from what he left unsaid, and certain remarks made at different times through inadvertence, when pieced together, made a definite enough story.

What he did tell us during those visits was almost the whole story of their association. I asked him once—making no bones about letting him know I did not for a moment believe she was a Baroness by birth—where she had learned her superficial good manners. He told us that she studied them at movies, which she attended very often. Then, at the night clubs where they went afterwards, she reproduced the rôles that had most pleased her. She was an admirable actress, he told us, and it was a thousand pities she had not gone on the stage. The theater would have been her perfect vocation, but he did not tell us why she had not embraced it. I asked what her husband said to all this, and he replied quite simply that that patient man had stood it as long as he could, but at last had had enough of seeing his wife go out every night with a different escort, and, for a consideration, had induced her to agree to a separation. I supposed that Lorenz had been taken up by the Baroness like any other of the innumerable young lounge lizards to be found at the dancing clubs in every European city. But I was mistaken. He had had a business, quite a good one, he told us, one of those typical Parisian bazaars where knickknacks are sold for disproportionate prices. It had been the Baroness's suggestion that they become partners, and he was charmed at the arrangement, being as blindly and hopelessly bewitched by her as many a youth of his age is bewitched by that type of older woman. The Baroness had taken over the bookkeeping, and he discovered after a while that she entered in the ledger only the expenditures, never the income. At first he had tried to get her to keep the shop's accounts in a more orthodox manner, but she had somehow always found means of postponing this reform, and he was far too bound to her to insist. The upshot was the inevitable one, that his business was wrecked and all his money lost.

It was then that the ill-starred publicity about our life on Friedo fell into the Baroness's hands. Immediately she seized upon the plan

which we had read of in the Guayaquil newspaper, and painted such a brilliant picture of a future for herself, Lorenz, and Philippson on Floreana, that she fired them with her own enthusiasm, and they fell in with all her proposals. Lorenz himself had had no choice, for she had completely ruined him financially. Not that his shop had been enough to provide her with the unlimited amount of money she required for her pleasures, but the open-handedness of her other lovers was variable, so that she needed his business to fall back upon. He had known quite well that she was ruining him, but had never once had the strength of will or, as he put it, the cruelty, to refuse his signature to a check when she demanded it.

There was real pathos in his remark that until the Baroness came into his life, though he was very young, he had enjoyed a good reputation, and it had really grieved him very much when she deprived him of this.

I asked him what he thought of the newspaper article in the Guayaquil daily, and heard to my amazement that he had no idea whatever what it contained, for he knew no word of Spanish. I was still more surprised to learn that the Baroness knew as little as he about its contents, not having shown it to the Ecuadorean, the only one who could have translated it for her. I gave Lorenz the German translation to read, which we had made for our own records, and thought that I had never seen such blank astonishment on anybody's face as on his while he devoured the story line for line.

It roused him to a fury more intense than I had thought him capable of. He did not burst out in abuse, but his rather weak young face seemed set in stone as he read; he turned white and his hands clasped and unclasped fiercely. This was an aspect of Lorenz which the Baroness herself, I thought, had probably never seen, and I wondered for the first time, but not for the last, whether there might conceivably be a limit beyond which even this captive could not be driven. The Ecuadorean interviewer had a skillful hand. While faithfully reporting, as though verbatim, the fantastic and adventurous projects of the Baroness, he had managed to do so in such a way that, to a reader capable of reading between the lines, the whole thing was a subtly ironic commentary on the lady,

giving more than a hint of unexpressed intentions. None of this escaped young Lorenz, and when he had finished he laid the sheets aside, got up without a word, bowed his farewell and left.

The New Year of 1933 brought something most unique to Floreana—its first native. One day Herr Wittmer came rushing into Friedo, all beaming and excited, and told us that his wife had given him a son, and would the doctor have the kindness to come and look at him. I have seldom seen such spontaneous pleasure light up Frederick's face as when this news was brought. It touched me, but caused me a pang as well, for I should dearly have loved to have a child too, Frederick's child. But I knew that, for himself, he deliberately and consistently rejected fatherhood. He hastened off with Wittmer, and I was left behind to fight alone against the wave of envy that overcame me. It was not envy of the happy woman up at the caves, whose joy I sincerely shared, but rather sorrow for all women who were like me, condemned to childlessness. I went round the garden looking for the nicest present I could offer the first Floreanan, and then went about my work. By the time Frederick came home I had come to perfect peace within myself again, and could ask him not only about the baby, but about its mother too, with a true sisterliness unshadowed by a bitter thought. The baby's name was to be Rolf, Frederick told me, and although it and the mother were doing splendidly, his services had by no means been superfluous.

The coming of the baby created an atmosphere almost like Christmas. All differences and quarrels were momentarily lost in a general warmth and good-will, so that when Frederick told me he had met the Baroness as he passed her place, and had had a long and pleasant chat with her, I was quite ready to think her pleasant and agreeable too; and when he pulled out a gift that she had given him for me—flower-seeds, of all things the one I most longed for—I felt like running up to thank her on the spot. So soft and gentle was Frederick these days, that he not only made no objection to my cultivating these flowers, but even praised the basket of banana leaves I made to plant the seeds in, in the absence of pots. If I had suspected the Borgia nature of this gift, I should have burned those seeds rather than see them sprout in Floreana

earth. But I suspected nothing, nor did I guess that as each flower came up I was to pay its price a thousandfold in sorrow.

My old resolve to keep relentlessly aloof from the Baroness melted away before this act of kindness, which I felt it would be too churlish to ignore. I therefore fell in readily with Frederick's suggestion that we accept her invitation to call on the following Sunday, when we were to pay our first social visit to the baby Wittmer. I felt that there could be no more appropriate occasion on which to patch up differences with neighbors, and I wanted very much that we should all, from now on, live in harmony and avoid future conflicts. As I said before, there was something about the Baroness that pleased and attracted me, so that I was all the readier to admit the possibility that I might have done her an injustice in thinking so badly of her. Deep down inside me the still, small voice of instinct whispered a warning. But I preferred to ignore it.

We chose the baby's present—a two-year-old date palm, two other palms, vegetables and fruits. For the Baroness we took kitchen herbs, ciruela, and otoy, which is prepared like cabbage, and is delicious. I thought that she would welcome these things for the sake of variety in her cuisine, knowing that she had not yet had time to raise much in her garden.

We were not far from our first destination when we met the Baroness and her three men. They were coming towards us; Lorenz bound for Post Office Bay, the other three for Friedo. Nothing could have been more friendly and delightful than the Baroness's manner towards me, and I think that at that moment I was conscious of a sentiment of honest cordiality for this inexplicable creature, at that moment so youthful, harmless, and naïve that it was quite impossible to believe that she and the evil genius of Lorenz were one and the same.

She looked charming in a black-and-white-checked silk frock very cunningly and simply cut, which set off her figure to perfection. She flourished a pig-skin riding stock, and was bareheaded. When we told them that we were on our way to the Wittmers', she, Philippson, and the Ecuadorean turned back with us, while

Lorenz went on alone. They said they would go home and await our coming.

I had not seen the Wittmers' ménage before, and was enthusiastic over the house they had built. It looked most picturesque with its well-laid thatch of banana leaves and its neat joinery. The talent of the born housewife was certainly Frau Wittmer's in a large measure. Her interior was as immaculate and orderly as that of any German housewife's I had ever seen, and I wondered with a certain amusement whether my Frederick had drawn a German man's comparison. It could not have disturbed him much if he had; perhaps he remembered a remark we often heard from our visitors: "The Wittmers' house is very nice, but at Ritter's you can talk!"

The week-old baby, looking a very promising specimen of new-born human being, lay sleeping peacefully in a pretty cradle which its father had constructed of lemonwood. It was decorated with some skillful carving, and was quite fit for its important occupant. Frau Wittmer, looking young and happy, received us with warmth, but I am afraid she forfeited all my sympathy with her one remark that she was resolved not to nurse the baby but to bring it up by hand, so that she should not lose her girlish figure. This on Floreana!

Inevitably, the central topic of our conversation was the lively Baroness. We had gathered from Wittmer on his weekly visits that there was no love lost between his household and the newcomers, but I was surprised to see how intense their dislike of the Baroness had become, and shuddered to think what open hatred might lead to in a place like this island, if it were allowed to grow. It was then that I decided it was my duty to try and make peace if I could; I offered myself as a mediator. At this the Wittmers felt impelled to unfold the whole story of their grievances, and we were bound to admit that their sentiments were not unnatural in the circumstances.

It must not be forgotten that circumstances in themselves very trivial can assume immense proportions in the wilderness. This is particularly true where tampering with supplies is concerned. Not only did the Ecuadorean merchants see in us islanders excellent

objects of exploitation and make us pay excessive prices for everything we ordered, because they knew we had to have the things and could not get them anywhere else, but there was no telling how many weeks or months might elapse between the calls of ships. Frederick and I, on account of our vegetarian regimen and our longer stay upon the island, had made ourselves moderately independent of the continent, and were in a far different position from the others. Still the difficulties connected with obtaining our modest requirements and those of our animals were so considerable that we could not possibly be a source of supply to others. In such an arid place as Floreana, each one must fend for himself.

The Wittmers told us how they had ordered a consignment of rice, which they needed badly. On the day the ship which was to bring this came to the island it was difficult for Wittmer to get away, and so he gladly accepted the Baroness's offer to receive it and have one of her people bring it up to the caves. It never came. Having miscalculated their stores from the beginning, and not yet having much in their garden, the Wittmers were gravely embarrassed by the absence of this rice, especially as the young expectant mother needed proper food. A day later the Baroness sent the Ecuadorean with a message to say that the differences between them should not be regarded in the face of famine, and offering to sell them rice for their immediate requirements from her own sufficient store. She was sure, she said, that their consignment would soon arrive, and would be glad to help them out until it did. There was nothing for it but to accept, though Wittmer said he did so very much against the grain. Moreover, she asked him a mighty price for it. He did not say how it was that he found out soon afterwards that the rice he had bought was his own. He knew this to be a fact, yet his position, considering the Baroness's bodyguard and the condition of his wife, was too weak for him to deal with this piece of trickery as he should rightfully have done. In view of this incident I realized that the Wittmers would be more reluctant than ever to take the olive branch I tendered, but nevertheless I used all my powers of persuasion—and they were not insignificant—to get their permission to let me try and bring the

factions to an outward truce at least. With the ceremony of the planting of the date-palm our visit to the Wittmers ended.

The Baroness had waited luncheon for us. Before we sat down to table she showed us round her garden. Its arrangement was most excellent, and filled me with surprise, for it was quite the sort of thing one sees in illustrated garden books, and certainly bore witness to the unremitting toil of several hands.

In comparison with the garden, the corrugated-iron house struck me from the outside as disappointing. As we went towards it, the Baroness told me that it had been built by the Ecuadorean, who was the only one of the men who understood manual labor. I expected to find the interior far less inviting than Frau Wittmer's, but what was my astonishment when we crossed the threshold. The walls were hung with carpets, which might not have been very costly but were extremely picturesque. There were two broad divans on which one sat by day and slept by night, as wide as double beds, with covers of bright silk, and heaped with cushions. The fireplace was framed in an artistic drapery, which caught the light of the flames in shimmering colors, and would make a comfortable and charming effect at night. There was nothing overdone in this decoration; everything was arranged in admirable taste. The house consisted of this one room with its two couches which served as beds—which told a great deal of the intimacies of the Baroness's household—and at one end a rough door separated the main apartment from a small store-room where the Ecuadorean slept, so we were told.

Particularly noticeable to me was the phonograph, which Lorenz had told us the Baroness was accustomed to playing while they worked. It had often driven him almost insane, he said. My eyes turned often towards it as though it had been a horrid instrument of torture. Our hostess evidently thought this indicated interest of a more agreeable kind, because she put a record on, a dance tune. While it was playing she informed us with much pride that the Ecuadorean had had to divest the Casa of many planks in order to enable her to have a dance floor in her house.

We did not stay long indoors as lunch was served outside. The Baroness was an amiable and expert hostess. It is true that she

monopolized the conversation, but this so entertainingly, and with such apparent confidence that her tales were as amusing to her guests as to herself, that one could only take it in good part, as with an animated and precocious child. She had a most attractive way of bragging, and if one had believed her, one must have thought her an absolute phenomenon, for she told us that she was highly trained in arts and crafts, in medicine, painting, gardening, and even teaching. According to her own account she had decided literary talent, which she now and then displayed to great advantage. She addressed her conversation almost entirely to Frederick, though at the same time cleverly including me. For the first time in my rather retiring life, I watched the woman's game played at close quarters, and though I found it somewhat despicable, I could not deny that, well played, it was full of charm.

The table appointments were uncommonly dainty; the cutlery particularly was very different from our own at Friedo. I noticed that this was stamped with a seven-pointed coronet with the initial under it, and this surprised me greatly, for it indicated the rank of counts, not barons. The Baroness should by rights then have called herself by the higher title of Countess Wagner. Playing, as one does, with my fork, I happened to turn it over, and found to my further surprise the tell-tale trade-mark "Cristoffel," the name of a ware rather less good than nickel-plate. These two clues, taken together, cast suspicion upon the Baroness's genuineness, and confirmed me in my certainty that she had no more right to a title than I myself. However, I said nothing, though an imp of meanness chuckled inside me, and I determined that I would draw her out when the next chance offered.

After lunch Philippson and Lorenz showed Frederick round the place and the Baroness devoted herself to me. She was all friendliness, and I was more than ready to meet her halfway. After all, it mattered nothing to me whether she was an impostor or not. Titles or no titles, silver or nickel, real or faked coats-of-arms made very little difference on Floreana, and if it amused this should-have-been actress to turn her life into a comedy, I saw no good reason why she should not do so.

Suddenly, to my embarrassment, the Baroness plunged into the

sort of conversation which I had heard about, but never actually experienced before. It did not take me long to discover that this woman was completely sex-mad, and I had as little desire to hear her confidences in this respect as to satisfy her burning curiosity as to my conjugal arrangements with my own man.

"The man isn't born," she said, "who can resist me, and I'm free to confess that I find variety the spice of life. I don't know how long I'll manage with Philippson alone, and I'm pretty tired of Lorenz; still something else will probably turn up.

"I suppose you think I'm very Parisian in my point of view," she went on engagingly, "but I happen to believe in making the most of the things you can do best. Of course in Paris, a lot of men fall for one's title, you know, but if that is what lures them at first, it's something else that keeps them."

I looked at her during this speech and wondered whether she really thought that it was making the desired impression on me. In the sharp light of the afternoon she looked the forty years and more that Lorenz, in an unguarded moment, had loaded her with. But she was excellently well preserved and could have passed, when made up, for no more than thirty. There was a curious hint of challenge in all this talk, as though she meant to say, "Better look out! Dr. Ritter also is just a man." But this did not affect me in the least, and I believe the Baroness realized that I was not alarmed, which seemed at once to pique and to amuse her.

When the time came for us to take our leave, I felt that I had had more than my fill of worldliness for one day. On our way back to Friedo, Frederick and I agreed that the visit had been precisely like attending a theater, only the performers had been almost more like marionettes than living actors. The three men were certainly little else than puppets, shoe strings the Baroness manipulated. But whose puppet she was we had not yet discovered.

Chapter XVIII: A SUSPICIOUS EVENT AND A SHOWDOWN

THE BARONESS HAD CERTAINLY IMPROVED THE ORIGINAL impression she made on me, and her ingratiating ways encouraged me to think that if she had been able to disarm me it could not be difficult to arrange a peace all round. We had extended a return invitation to her and her companions, and three weeks later I held a grand luncheon party for them all at Friedo.

I made it a point not of rivalry but of honor to show what our plantation could produce, and so composed a meal that a far better housewife than I might have been justly proud of. There was rice soup and kohlrabi stuffed with a purée of peas, and a salad made of my marvelous cucumbers, which grew like weeds and had an unusually fine flavor. With the third course I wanted especially to please young Lorenz; this consisted of the otoy dish with peanut butter, his favorite. I made a cake for dessert, and the flour in it was the only ingredient in the whole meal which did not actually come from Floreana. We had sugar-cane juice flavored with pineapple to drink. It took a long time to prepare this native meal, and our guests arrived before I had quite done putting the finishing touches to it.

It was not until they were seated at the lunch table that I noticed with regret that Lorenz was missing. Remembering his hatred of the man Philippson, the dark-haired lover whom the Baroness foolishly insisted on referring to as her "husband," I wondered whether the two of them had arranged to keep Lorenz working on that day. It annoyed me to think this might be so, for my invitation had been extended to him as well, and I thought it would have been both better manners and better policy not to display domestic differences so blatantly as by his absence.

Annoyance changed to consternation, however, at the Baroness's explanation as to why Lorenz had not come. She was extremely voluble. She used those conscious modulations of the voice which I had already noticed were a sign of particularly lurid lying on her part. The present situation called for the registering of deep emotion, so we were told in rich contralto that the poor, unfor-

tunate, dear boy had suddenly been taken with a most alarming sickness. It was difficult to diagnose, but was apparently one of those tropical ailments. The sudden infection seemed to have brought on a recurrence of his tuberculosis. It was all terribly alarming, and for fear it might take a rapid, fatal turn, she had put him down at the Casa, though of course it was most dreadful that the wretched house was so far away, and one almost perished of alarm lest the next time one went down to see the patient, one would find him dead.

An almost imperceptible smile on Frederick's face betrayed his thoughts clearly enough, but he did not say aloud that he found it very strange that a doctor on the island had not been called in for so serious a case as this, nor did he ask what treatment was being given, nor whether there was anyone down at the Bay keeping watch over a sick man in such dire condition.

As for me, I was absolutely speechless. Either this woman was the most abysmal liar and there was nothing wrong with Lorenz at all, or else she was a fiend of callousness and cruelty to have put him out of her way down at the Casa, all alone, to fend for himself as best he might. I did not believe in the tropical ailment, nor did I believe in the tuberculosis.

Another possibility entered my mind, but this was so outrageous that I put it violently away from me, and was furious at myself for allowing the Baroness to encourage in me thoughts as melodramatic as her own. I looked at her sitting there perfectly unmoved, rattling off words of deep concern which she obviously did not feel, and eating her luncheon with good appetite, while —supposing the alleged illness were true—a man who loved her, whom she had at least once loved, whose career she had ruined, whom she had brought out to this wild place under false pretenses, lay suffering, perhaps dying, a stone's-throw away. As I watched her I began to believe that Lorenz really was ill, and in spite of all my inner protest, the hideous suspicion invaded me again, refusing this time to be banished.

During the weeks between our visit to the Baroness and this return call there had been unusually much to do at Friedo, and as if to emphasize our remoteness from the life she represented and

had brought to the island, Frederick and I had shut ourselves more closely inside our own world, reading and studying, and immersing ourselves more deeply and uninterruptedly than we had done for some time in the philosophy which was at once our refuge and our universe.

Lorenz had not been down to see us since, and we had paid but scant attention to Wittmer's weekly gossip. But now it came back to me that he had told us there had been much violent quarreling at the Baroness's, clearly audible at the Wittmers', for the houses were near each other on account of the spring.

One day there had been a fearful scene, with everybody shouting together, he told us, and thereafter Lorenz had been seen no more at the caves, though Wittmer had met him at Post Office Bay. I remembered that he had told us that the climate of the island was evidently not agreeing with the young man, who seemed in a state of abnormal exhaustion, hardly able to do more than drag himself about; also that a bad catarrh troubled him greatly, and that a skin eruption was spoiling his good looks. I must have stored this information up unconsciously, for it all returned now clearly to my memory. I pitied the boy from the bottom of my heart and wished that I had had the wisdom not to let him come and see us.

I blamed myself for not having saved him from the vengeance of this woman, if she suspected that he had been betraying her secrets. After all, nothing was more likely than that the spy, Valdivieso, had gathered from Lorenz's unfinished work that he had gone off somewhere, and guessed that it might be to us. He might even have surprised him, coming or going. It was not as though I had not noticed, even on the first day, how terrified the Baroness was lest Lorenz move out of earshot, and I felt that I should at all costs have remembered this and warned him.

Luckily for the outward peacefulness of the luncheon party the Baroness evidently did not notice that I grew completely silent. As usual, she addressed herself chiefly to the men present, keeping up an incessant flow of conversation about herself and her thrilling experiences in every corner of the globe. But had my life depended on it, I could not have talked to her in that moment of

chill horror which followed the sinister conclusion I had begun to draw as to the cause of Lorenz's sickness.

The absolutely noncommittal calm of Philippson made him seem horrible to me. He said little, hardly speaking unless spoken to, and then it was almost always the Baroness herself who drew him into the conversation. While she was telling us about Lorenz's illness, I noticed the mask-like absence of expression on this man's face; I knew that these two men were rivals, that Lorenz, the ex-favorite, had been deposed in favor of this other, and that, while both were slaves to the woman, even to the extent of sleeping with her together in one bed when she commanded them to do so, a deadly hatred existed between them. It was not the wholesome, if primitive, hatred of rivals in love, but the unspeakable mutual loathing of two men, each seeing in the other the picture of his own debasement, compelled to live together.

Had Philippson taken advantage of the Baroness's present preference for himself to induce her to remove his mirror from his sight? Had she, bored with or afraid of Lorenz, used her power over Philippson to make him her accomplice against his enemy? Was the Ecuadorean the mere employee he seemed, or was his actual rôle something quite different, that I could not even guess at?

Suddenly the voice of my Burro broke into the turmoil of my thoughts. I could have kissed him for that interruption. I got up —how thankfully!—from the table, and went to let him into the corral, where the Baroness's donkey was. When I returned, she had come to the feminine topic of Parisian styles, and needed me now for her audience. I had to make a show of interest. Hardly was she well started than Burro made himself very determinedly heard again—of course, I had forgotten to take him water. The Baroness was much displeased, but the remark she made was only a shade caustic, and I attended to my donkey's wants.

When I came back the Baroness continued the interrupted theme. She said the very latest thing in Paris was white lace. "You know," she said, "the kind of thing they put all the virgins into for their first communion." She said this with unmistakable suggestiveness, but the situation was once more saved—and wrecked—by Burro, this time trampling furiously to be let out. The Baroness had no

reserve about her annoyance at having been balked of a conversational success by the ill manners of a donkey.

When I came back at last, she said, "If you treat your husband as well as you do your donkey, what a happy man he must be!" The words and tone were full of venom.

I felt sorry for my poor Burro that he had incurred such jealousy. I should have been far sorrier had I dreamed that his innocent incursion into the center of a stage where the Baroness was already established would cost him his life.

The talk did not return to fashions. On the contrary, from that moment till the end of the visit it became more and more menacing and uncanny. The Baroness began to tell us of her hunting expeditions on the island. She boasted of her marksmanship, and though I doubted almost everything she said about herself, I felt that it was true that she was a good shot with a gun. I could hardly believe my ears as she proceeded to relate her hunting tales. We had cured Hugo of the wanton slaughter he had been accustomed to wreak among the wild cattle of Floreana. Now we were to hear that this had recommenced on a far larger scale. The Baroness informed us that she ate no meat except the best cuts of veal or pork, and had to be well supplied with these. She left us to surmise what this implied.

If this sounded extravagant, it was as nothing compared with her procedure with the wild dogs. It seemed she wished to own a dog or two, but the wild ones roaming the island had refused to let themselves be caught or lured into the precincts of the Baroness's land. She therefore devised another means of getting hold of them.

"Men and dogs are all alike," she said. "If they won't come willingly, you bring them down by force, and then you make them well again. They will stay then, and it does them good to know who is their master." Incredible as it may sound, this was literally her method. She had gone out on the *pampa* and shot two wild dogs in the belly, though not fatally. Then she had brought them round, and apparently they had remained with her, though one of them, according to her own story, had been crippled for life.

These and similar experiences were now the Baroness's themes, but I had ceased to listen. I looked around at Friedo, the place of

peace, that had been made to harbor good living and good thoughts. In Frederick's time and mine, at least, it had seen no cruelty or violence, but all animals could come there without fear, and all human beings received an honest welcome. What was this woman doing here? She seemed to turn the place into a travesty of itself. I felt as Eve must have felt on learning that the serpent was the Evil One.

Near where we sat lay the pile of gifts with which we had marked the cordial intention of this occasion—a date palm, otoy and sugar-cane plants, pineapple shoots, aguacate and vine shoots; also seven different kinds of banana plants, for although the Baroness had planted bananas, the Friedo species had acquired a reputation up and down the Ecuadorean coast as the best obtainable. I could not wait for her to go and take these things with her; the very sight of them was an offense, and nothing in the world would have induced me to touch a single leaf of them again. It was as though through the mere fact of having been accepted by this person they had become tainted.

What was my consternation when the Baroness's voice cut into these dark thoughts of mine, saying, "Oh, Dr. Ritter—do tell me! Is it true that milk's the antidote for arsenic poisoning?" I turned and looked at her so sharply that if she had noticed, something awful must have happened. But she noticed nothing. The question had been asked as though quite idly, flung out in the incoherent and irrelevant way she had. I wondered if Frederick, who had as usual not been given time to answer the question, had been made thoughtful by it. But his face was calm.

At long last this hideous afternoon came to an end, and the Baroness and Philippson rose to leave. The courteous Frederick accompanied them to the edge of Friedo. I excused myself on the pretext of having to feed my animals. I stood where they had left me, listening to the sound of the donkey's footsteps, very audible in the silence, and almost fearing to ask myself the question—had Friedo harbored murderers that day?

When Frederick came back I searched his face for the look which would betray that his thoughts were the same as mine. But he was quite calm, merely a little bored.

"Such a waste of time," he said, "chattering with a woman all afternoon."

I stared at him in blank amazement.

"You must be blind!" I said. "Can't you see the woman's a criminal?"

Frederick looked at me and smiled. "My dear child," he said. "Don't tell me you're becoming theatrical, too!"

This was too much. The anguish I had been through had brought me to such a pitch of nervousness that I could not contain myself a moment longer. I broke out into a storm of accusation. I insisted on Frederick's immediately going down to Post Office Bay to find out whether Lorenz was alive or dead, and help him if it was not too late. I said that we must absolutely get a message to the Ecuadorean authorities, telling them the island was unsafe so long as this woman inhabited it. I said that ordinary humanity demanded that we come to the aid of that unfortunate young man who, whatever he might be, was as entitled as anybody else to protection against murderers.

Frederick very wisely waited till this storm subsided. Then he said, "Listen, my dear, you are much too excited not to resent it if I tell you that I think you take this woman far too seriously. I think she's just an actress. But even supposing she was everything you suspect—what would be her advantage at present if she murdered this young man? Murders of such a kind always have a motive, and the Baroness, though hysterical, is shrewd enough. Of course, I don't believe for a moment that Lorenz has tuberculosis. It ought to show you what a fool she is, to think that she could take in a medical man with such a piece of nonsense. But murder? There would be inquiries. That would be very embarrassing to her, for I am qualified to make a post-mortem; and as she hasn't seduced me yet and is not likely to, I should naturally report the truth. As for leaving Lorenz quite alone down at the Casa, where at any moment people might land and take him off the island and put him into a hospital where he could talk unchecked, that is even less likely. So you see, this is obviously a scheme of sheer intimidation. The woman is undoubtedly a person

who would stop at nothing, but it isn't in her interest to do what you suspect."

As always, I had to admit that Frederick was right, but though reassured on the main point, I was still unreconciled. I asked Frederick if he meant to look up the sick boy, and see what he could do for him, but he said no. To do so would only bring a mountain of trouble upon us, and would, moreover, do a very ill turn to Lorenz, even to the extent of putting him in serious danger, for the Baroness was a woman who would brook no interference. Her vindictiveness would know no bounds if she once thought she had been double-crossed, and until there was grave reason to believe that Lorenz's life was in danger, he would keep his hands off and so must I. But the next time Wittmer went down to the Bay he should ask Lorenz if he wanted to consult a doctor. Then it would be professionally correct, and Frederick would on no account refuse his services, whatever the consequences. I insisted that we write a letter to the Ecuadorean government or to the German consul, but Frederick shook his head. "There would be no more use in that," he said, "than in the other letter I wrote to very much the same effect after her outrageous performance that time with Stampa. That one was also ignored."

"I simply cannot understand it," I said. "Surely those people owe us some protection."

When Wittmer came down the next time we told him to try and get Lorenz to let Frederick see him, but no such call came.

The end of January brought us a pleasant surprise. Our friend Captain Hancock, of the cruiser *Velero*, returned. He overloaded us with gifts which we could only inadequately repay with the sincerity of our pleasure at meeting him again. Naturally the party on the *Velero* had heard all about the Baroness and were much intrigued. We gave but noncommittal answers to their questions, turning off their demands for our opinion by saying that we preferred to let them form their own.

I knew very well that the Baroness would be in a fever of excitement at the arrival of the first of the millionaires she hoped to bait, and I was curious to see what would happen. At Captain Hancock's request, Frederick showed him and his party the way up

to the Baroness's house, but I did not accompany them. A few hours later they returned, the Baroness and Philippson with them. With Captain Hancock's many gifts strewn about the veranda, the place looked like a birthday, and I saw a gleam of sharp resentment in the Baroness's eyes as she saw these tokens of the Captain's friendliness towards us.

Contretemps large and small, and much veiled and unveiled malice marred the remainder of that day, so that I was almost glad this time when the visitors took their leave, promising to come back in a week, when they hoped to have completed a botanical expedition to the other islands.

A second group from the *Velero* had joined their friends at Friedo, coming up from Post Office Bay and bringing Lorenz with them. I saw him recoil when he caught sight of the Baroness and Philippson on the veranda, but one look from her, and an almost imperceptible yet most imperious movement of the hand, brought him to her side. For a moment they chatted together, in the most natural manner in the world. Though hatred might now bind these two people as love had bound them formerly, nothing could have been more flawless and complete than their understanding of each other. It was like the unhallowed mutual understanding of a wild animal and its circus trainer. The more I saw of the Baroness and Lorenz, the more apt this comparison seemed to me, with all the frightening possibilities that it implied.

In Lorenz's greeting to me and Frederick there was a touch of hesitancy, as though he feared that we had drawn dangerous conclusions from his ignoring our offer to be of help to him. But I took the bull by the horns, and said in a very distinct voice, "We are glad to see you up here again after all these months, Herr Lorenz. Are you better? We heard that you'd been ill." I saw the Baroness dart me a look of sheer malevolence, and she answered for him before he had time furtively to seek his cue from her.

"Herr Lorenz has quite recovered, thank you. If another doctor had been necessary, I should, of course, have consulted Dr. Ritter."

"Another doctor?" asked one of Captain Hancock's friends, who happened to be sitting next to her.

"Oh, yes!" she answered charmingly. "I'm practically that as

well, though I know I don't look much like such a blue-stocking! Just think, this place affected our Lorenz so queerly he fell most frightfully ill. I even thought we might lose him, but I pulled him through all right. Didn't I?" and she turned towards Lorenz.

Lorenz looked a wreck indeed; his nice fresh color had all gone, he had grown thin and gaunt. One would hardly have recognized him as the handsome, debonair young man who had arrived so short a while ago. But he made a brave, convincing answer, and the topic changed to something else.

As Captain Hancock left, I swore that I would tell him everything on his return, and ask him not to inflict the Baroness's presence upon me again. But when it came to the point I did no such thing.

The *Velero* took the Ecuadorean, Valdivieso, off Floreana. His contract with the Baroness had expired, and he refused to renew it. There had been a fierce set-to between them, but Valdivieso turned upon the Baroness and Philippson so threateningly that they retired in confusion. This information was brought us afterwards by Wittmer. At the time of the visit, we only knew that the man was leaving, and I guessed that this could not fail to affect Lorenz's situation, for who would act as policeman over him? It occurred to me that perhaps a kind of reconciliation had been arranged, and I almost hoped so for his sake.

As soon as we were alone, I complained bitterly to Frederick about this woman's wrecking of my peace. He did not take me seriously, but passed it off as "women's bickerings," and advised me with the utmost urgency to remain on outwardly good terms with her.

"She is not harmless," he said, "but she is not so very dangerous either. Only one thing you must remember—she has come here to make her fortune by fair means or foul, and she is a determined person. She will sooner push us off this island than we her, because we are less ruthless than she. Open war could only mean our leaving. The choice lies entirely with ourselves—in fact with you, Dore. Is Friedo worth this effort of self-control to you?"

"How can you ask?" I answered.

"Very well, then, we must act accordingly. And I don't believe

that she will be here longer than about another year at the very outside. We can well afford to wait."

This was all true, but hard to admit. For the hundredth time I resolved to forget her existence as far as possible, and hoped that Friedo would be spared unnecessary reminders of it.

The Sunday following the departure of the *Velero* showed how vain this hope had been. Unannounced and uninvited, the Baroness paid a call upon us with the inevitable Philippson as escort. I could not imagine the Baroness doing anything without a purpose, but what the object of this visit was I could not guess and was never to find out.

The conversation began harmlessly enough but I felt that this was but a prelude. I have no liking for, and little patience with, empty social chatter, so when the talk flagged I did not trouble much to fill in the pauses.

All at once the Baroness said, "Too kind of you to have sent fodder to my donkeys at the Bay! I suppose that Captain Hancock thinks your kindness to animals most awfully touching—it's not a bad trick!"

"Captain Hancock," I answered, "saw that those poor beasts were almost starved to death, and asked me to send them down some sugar-cane. As to the rest of your remark, I prefer not to have heard it. But at any rate, if Captain Hancock thinks I'm decent to my animals, he could hardly think the same of you, after seeing the state that yours are in."

The Baroness laughed. "Oh, not at all, my dear," she said. "He was absolutely horrified about the poor things. But he doesn't for a moment believe that I had anything to do with them. We told him they were yours!"

This took me so utterly aback that I could only gasp.

"You'll have your work cut out explaining that away to him, won't you?" she said. I could not even answer her.

"I think it might be just as well, you know," she went on after a pause, "if you confined that extreme kind-heartedness of yours to animals. It's a lot safer."

"I don't know what you mean," I said.

"Well, in future, just let the state of Lorenz's health be my affair,

won't you? Of course, we thought your interest very touching and all that, but it's after all none of your business. Or are you perhaps in love with him?"

"If you have come to my house to insult me, Frau Wagner," I said, "I think perhaps you'd better go before I ask you to."

Again she laughed, but this time more ingratiatingly, and I waited for the next sally, knowing that she was not done with me yet.

"Your Captain Hancock is very generous to his protégés," said the Baroness.

"Frederick and I are nobody's protégés," I answered, "but Captain Hancock has been very kind to us."

"He was simply charmed with my place," said the Baroness. "When he comes back we're going to make a film."

"Indeed?" said I.

"Yes. It's to be called *The Empress of Floreana.* That's me!"

"I wasn't aware of it," I said. "Have you bought the place by any chance?"

"No," said the Baroness, "but the aristocracy are the natural rulers of the places they come to. It's in my blood—you wouldn't understand—it's a feeling one has to be born to, don't you know! But please don't be afraid that I'll put on airs with you. I'm really very democratic, and have always got on excellently with the common people."

"Oh, my dear woman," I said, "we're not acting in your film. You know I don't believe you're any more a Baroness than I am!"

For half a second she was disconcerted, then putting on her most regal air she said, "You are very insolent, but I suppose you don't know any better."

I really had to admire the woman. She was indeed, as Lorenz had said, a superb actress.

"On the contrary," I answered, "I know a good deal better. I know, for instance, that your nickel spoons and forks are unfortunately decorated with the wrong coronet. Quite ordinary commoners learn in school that the barons have five points and the counts seven."

This caught her off her guard and she was plainly rattled, but again only for a moment. Still smiling, she said, "I congratulate

you, my dear woman! But as it happens, my silver belonged to my mother, and the coronet engraved on it was hers."

"I see," I said.

But now my hunting blood was up, and I resolved to corner this quarry, though rather despising myself for relishing so mean a sport. I led the conversation to the exigencies of the tropical climate, and said that valuable metals rather suffered through exposure to the heat and being washed in the peculiar kind of water on Floreana. I said that we had brought very little cutlery with the exception of nerosta ware, and had found that this was by far the most suitable metal for the tropics.

Knowing my pigeon, I added, "But, of course, nerosta is horribly expensive."

I knew quite well that this would draw her, for if there was one thing she could not endure, it was the thought that anybody possessed anything of more value than something of hers, no matter what it was. "Much dearer than silver," I repeated meaningly.

"I rather doubt that," said the Baroness, and turned to Philippson. "How much was it, darling, that we paid for our cutlery—not including the engraving, of course?" This was to me.

I laughed outright. I had brought down my bird, and now began to feel really sorry for her, more sincerely unhostile than at any time since I had met her. The poor thing could not deal with this situation, and did exactly the wrong thing. Talking fifteen to the dozen, she plunged into the wildest account of her antecedents, her childhood, her education, her experience at court where her mother, so she said, had been a lady-in-waiting, of balls and parties and illustrious suitors. But in every other sentence was a contradiction, and as she forgot one lie before she had composed the next, her tale became a pitiful kaleidoscope of foolish boastings, until I myself would gladly have interrupted her for her own dignity's sake. Philippson was in the throes of dire embarrassment, but she ignored the warning pushes of his foot against hers underneath the table, all easily visible to me; she was so wound up that only the exhaustion of both breath and fantasy could stop her.

After it was all over, she said, "Now perhaps you believe me!"

I had really no serious enmity against her now. I regarded her

as a thing of tinsel, rather to be pitied. I should have answered her accordingly, but I suppose I had not yet downed the imp of cruelty inside me, and so I said instead, "Of course I don't! What nonsense!"

But Philippson had had enough. "Come, little one," said this young man to his mistress of forty-four, "you have been sufficiently insulted. Let us go."

Now Frederick came upon the scene and received the full flood of animadversion against me. Remembering the talk we had had about an open war, and his advice to me, which I had promised to take, Frederick ranged himself on the Baroness's side—as I thought, inexcusably. Thinking herself secure in this unexpected and powerful protection, the lady then made the mistake of allowing herself to fling at me an epithet of a kind which is considered even among the lowest of the low a little strong for use in mixed company. But Frederick was a wise man, and knew how to turn this to advantage.

He said, "Well, Baroness, after that expression, I think that you and Dore are at least quits, no matter what she may have said to you. Let us come back and eat lunch together, and not waste time with all this nonsense."

It was impossible for the woman to refuse. A curious change had taken place in her whole manner. She became less careful of the words she used, and her talk was often that of a woman of the streets. It astounded Frederick, as I could see, and made him blush for her. He was offended and uncomfortable. But I was glad, and thought it served him right. I was in good humor at this meal and afterwards, and when the company left and Frederick looked as though he were about to rebuke me, I said, "You need not bother, my dear. It's just as well this happened, in fact excellent for all concerned. It was I who won, and not the Baroness."

But I was flattering myself.

Chapter XIX: THE BARONESS IS DISAPPOINTED

Whenever Herr Wittmer went down to Black Beach to get his skiff and row round to the Bay to see whether mail had come, he would drop in at Friedo and ask us if there was anything we wanted him to do for us. One day early in February he came by for this purpose and stopped awhile to tell us the neighborhood news.

Up at the caves, the social atmosphere was very sultry and it could not be long, he said, before he and his neighbors had a showdown. We believed him when he said that he was a man who would do almost anything for the sake of peace, and make a thousand compromises rather than fight; but too much was too much, he said, and he was almost at the end of nerves and patience.

It was no easy matter to raise the baby on Floreana, and they had waited in some anxiety for the arrival of forty tins of condensed milk they had ordered. This indispensable supply had not arrived and his wife was very worried, for there was no chance whatever of obtaining milk otherwise. It was impossible to ask the Baroness to sell them milk from her cows even if she had been willing to do so for a high price, because the poor beasts were in the last stages of neglect, almost of starvation, and could probably not have produced a cupful between them. While they were waiting for the tinned milk to arrive, he said, they often thought what an irony it was to have a herd of good strong cattle roaming on the *pampa* but quite impossible to domesticate. It was Captain Hancock who had been kind enough to say that, as he was returning so soon to the island, he would be glad to bring not only the milk but blankets also, and a bolt of cotton for clothes. Meanwhile the Captain had come and gone again, and Wittmer had not seen him. He had gone down to the Bay but the supplies had not been landed. He could not help suspecting that there was something very odd about this, as Captain Hancock would certainly not have left the baby in the lurch like that.

A day or two later the Baroness had sent Philippson over with a few blankets "which she hoped Frau Wittmer might care to make use of." There was no great friendliness in this action, for the things

were very shabby and soiled. But Frau Wittmer had accepted them gladly, and on the whole the relations between the two houses became again fairly pleasant, though still far from cordial.

Now, however, Wittmer was convinced that all the things he ordered had been brought, and that the Baroness had simply stolen them. The whole business was too much like the rice episode.

My intercession in the cause of peace had caused the resumption of relations between the Wittmers and the Baroness; now seemingly she had once more abused them. But I will do Herr Wittmer the justice to say that he would not hold me responsible for the imminent rupture. Both Frederick and I had by now formed an excellent opinion of Herr Wittmer. He had shown himself in many ways to be a thoroughly likable and honorable person. We thought him most unfortunate in his partner, who was neither so well-bred nor so kindly a person as he, and who was, moreover, quite obviously dazzled by the proximity of the nobility, and hand-in-glove with the Baroness.

Frau Wittmer was a rather ordinary type of woman and a great gossip. We were quite sure that life in the wilderness would lose its charm for her comparatively soon. Herr Wittmer certainly felt that we were not attracted to his companion, and was tactful enough not to invite us too often to his house. But he came faithfully every week to Friedo, and we were always glad to see him. He also told us on this visit that since the departure of Valdivieso, Lorenz had been taken back into the family bosom and was living at the Baroness's. Apparently he and Philippson had also called a kind of truce; at any rate, for the time being there had been no more alarming quarrels. I was sure that it would have been better if Lorenz had had as much courage as Valdivieso and had gone away also. I could not believe that that triangle up at the caves would remain intact, and knew that when it broke apart it would do so only at the cost of considerable havoc.

Hardly had Wittmer left for Black Beach than he was back again, shouting to us furiously that his boat had disappeared. It could not possibly have been washed out to sea; no one had been there but Captain Hancock and a small yachting party of Englishmen—all of them people obviously incapable of stealing a boat, and having

no use for it in any case. The only remaining possibility was the Baroness.

Frederick said, "Why don't you ask your neighbor? She could probably tell you where it is."

If the Baroness had played this trick on Wittmer it was one of sheerest malice, for she could not use the stolen property without being discovered as the thief. If she had destroyed it—and we thought she must have done so—it was out of sheer envy. This theory was amply borne out when, later, we learned what had really happened to the boat. The Baroness had made the Ecuadorean, Valdivieso, take it along with him when he left.

She herself, however, told a different story, which ran as follows: The English yachtsmen had stolen it, and it had been bought from them at Panama by a Frenchman who performed the striking feat of paddling it all the way from Panama to Chatham. It was now at Chatham, so she told Herr Wittmer.

Considering that the boat was a frail, collapsible affair and the voyage from Panama no short or simple one, we sensed that this was only another of the lady's yarns, and that actually the Ecuadorean had taken the boat and left it where he landed.

This insensate jealousy of the Baroness's was becoming almost intolerable. She begrudged everybody everything. Even my Burro had become an object of her especial hatred since the day when he had broken into her conversation, and especially since she had heard some American visitors to the island talking admiringly about him. Her open hatred of this harmless animal had reached such a pitch that Wittmer, when he borrowed him, as he sometimes did, never dared let him loose except at a safe distance from the woman's place.

After the incident of the stolen boat, Wittmer, in consultation with Frederick, wrote to the Ecuadorean authorities, reporting the theft. To this complaint Frederick added a general report upon the present condition of the island, stating that the presence of the new settlers was rapidly rendering the place intolerable for all others. He asked that something be done, and suggested that the most immediate need was for a qualified medical expert to come over and examine the woman as to her mental condition. He was

convinced that she was not altogether sane, but still held to his opinion that her infirmity was nothing more serious than acute hysteria.

One morning we were busy sorting papayas when we noticed, approaching our side of the island, a yacht and a smaller craft that looked like a fishing-boat. They both seemed to be making for Black Beach, and as the yacht came nearer we could tell by its yellow funnels that it was the *Nourmahal*, and that we could look forward to a third visit from Mr. Vincent Astor.

Before the *Nourmahal* had even anchored, a rowboat put off rapidly from the fishermen's side, stopped for a few moments at the yacht, and then returned where it had come from.

Immediately afterwards Mr. Astor's motorboat left the yacht, and we made ready to receive him in about half an hour. Frederick went down the path to meet our guest, while I stayed to feed my Burro, who had been neglected during the sorting of the papayas, and was now demanding his breakfast with much indignation.

He was a particular pet of Mr. Astor's, who loved his deep bray and called him the "Caruso of Floreana." Another trick of Burro's, which he had learned all by himself, was his loud announcing of all visitors, just like a dog. He had a special voice for this. No sooner had he heralded Mr. Astor than the whole party arrived. Frederick was pushing a brand-new wheelbarrow before him.

When the first greetings had been exchanged, Mr. Astor showed his party all over Friedo. He was as familiar with everything as we were ourselves, and seemed to take special pleasure in doing the honors in our stead. Mr. Astor was amused. He had, he said, received an extremely hospitable invitation from the Baroness, who was apparently all set to receive him in great style. But he did not think that he would go.

While some of his friends protested that if he did not, they could not very well, and that he was depriving them thereby of a good show, Burro again announced the approach of visitors, and Frederick hastened to the gate. It was the padrone of Isabella with his young wife, whom he had brought to consult Frederick, as she had been ailing of late. They had an exciting tale to tell.

They had come to Floreana in a hired fisher-boat and had seen

the *Nourmahal* anchored in Post Office Bay. The moment they landed, a young man stormed out of the Casa towards them, and insisted that they order their boatman to take him immediately to the yacht. There was such agitation in his manner, in fact he seemed so thoroughly beside himself, that they thought he must be in some awful trouble, so they did not hesitate a moment, but urged their man to make all speed to convey the stranger where he wished to go.

Their interest had been very much aroused, especially as he had not told them why they were to render him this service, so they waited on the beach to see what would happen next, speculating meanwhile as to what might be the contents of a letter the young man was waving frantically in his hand, as though in a fever of anxiety and suspense. When they saw the big ship suddenly begin to move rapidly off so that it would be quite impossible for the rower ever to catch up with it, they felt dreadfully distressed about the poor young man. They almost expected the excited señor to jump into the sea, and were in great alarm as to what would happen if the mysterious letter went undelivered. In due course the boatman brought the young man back, and if he had been agitated before, he was in a frenzy now. Before they knew what was happening to them, he had fairly bundled them both back into the fishing-boat and was imploring them to make all haste to reach Black Beach, whither, he said, the yacht was bound. The situation was the more difficult, as the young man could speak no word of Spanish, and the padrone could only make shift to understand his French. The rest of the incident as they related it corresponded to what we had seen, and they were no wiser than we. It did not take much guessing on our part, however, to figure out that the excited messenger had been none other than Philippson and that the letter was the Baroness's invitation.

Mr. Astor did not go to see the Baroness. We spent the evening with him on the *Nourmahal*; when we reached Friedo later we turned for a farewell look to see the yacht gliding off towards Isabella, with all her shining lights reflected in the midnight waters.

Early next morning we heard a loud voice calling outside Friedo, and the next moment Philippson appeared. We were not over-

pleased to see him but went towards him with a polite word of greeting, which he scarcely returned. Without waiting for our invitation, he strode towards the house. His conduct was so strange that for a second we could find nothing to say. He cast one searching look around that took in the whole veranda, then penetrated farther into our "reading room." Arrived there, he again looked around him with a strange expression but offered no explanation for this singular behavior.

We stood and watched him, thinking that he had probably gone mad. This would not in the least have surprised us, for we were beginning to think that a half-insane woman like the Baroness could easily turn the brains of anyone who lived at close quarters with her for any length of time. Philippson's face was white with a kind of suppressed fury and he seemed to be holding himself in check with all his strength. Suddenly the bonds of self-control snapped, and gripping the edge of the table tightly with both hands, he burst into such a torrent of recrimination against us that it fairly took our breath away. When we were finally able to make out what it was all about, we learned that we had used our influence with Mr. Astor to keep him from the Baroness, and that we alone were to blame for the insult he had inflicted upon her through his ignoring of her invitation.

"My dear man," said Frederick quietly, "you're talking utter nonsense. We are not interested in other people's affairs and it is certainly nothing to us whom Frau von Wagner chooses to invite or who accepts or declines her invitations. I think you'd better go. Good-morning!"

This calm rejoinder caused a fresh explosion. I should never have thought it possible that this man and the Philippson we knew could be one and the same person. His good-looking features were distorted with rage. He seemed hardly to know what he was saying, and his tirade ended by his suddenly whirling round on Frederick with his hand lifted for a blow.

During this scene I watched Frederick's excitement steadily rising, and was in terror lest it overcome him suddenly so that he would knock the young man down. I thought of the trouble this

might lead to, and stood by in anguish, hoping that nothing would happen.

Frederick had been sitting down. I saw the superhuman effort with which he forced his voice to calmness, and conquered the tide of fury which had surged up in him. Now quite quietly he got up and took Philippson's upraised arm, looking him so powerfully in the eyes that the younger man, like a cowed animal, wilted before him. Then he took him to the gate, which Philippson, in his excitement, had left wide open. Philippson went without another word.

I watched him following the path back to the caves, and there was something in the way he walked, so dejected and somehow so lost, that vanquished all my anger against him. He seemed to me only the poor slave he was, terrified to go back with his mission—whatever it had been—unfulfilled.

When Frederick returned from showing our visitor the door he had almost regained his serenity, but not quite. He went straight into the house, to where he had fixed up his little workshop, and came out again with the machete. He did not tell me what he was going to do with it and I did not ask.

After a while I went out to find him, and see whether I might help. I found him laboring with grim efficiency at the making of a new path. I could guess the meaning of this. Hitherto, in order to reach the Baroness's plantation, one had to pass by Friedo. Now Frederick was making another road, in order that the Friedo path need not be used by strangers. This visit was to cost him weeks of work, and what was worse, he had to sacrifice to it many of the mornings which had always been devoted to his studies. This was the hardest blow of all, for Frederick was one of those who know that time lost can never be regained, and that the longest life is far too short for the perfecting of a system of philosophy.

The next day was the day of Wittmer's weekly visit. He came down full of curiosity to hear what had happened. We told him the whole story and received from him the key to the mystery of Philippson's weird behavior.

It seemed that the Baroness firmly believed that Mr. Astor had smothered us in gifts of foodstuffs. She further believed that we

deliberately concealed this fact, in order not to share with anybody, and one of the reasons why we prevented these rich people from visiting the other settlers was, she insisted, because we were hoarders and grabbers of the worst description. She had therefore instructed Philippson to spring his surprise visit upon us, calculating that since we were not expecting it we would not have thought of hiding these important gifts away. He was to look around and see what we had got.

When he came back and reported that he had seen nothing, she sent him to the beach to look for our cache there.

Frederick and I looked at each other. Here was the little, envious, mistrustful, grasping, grudging world in miniature, pursuing us even here at the ends of the earth. There was nothing to say and nothing to do, but try and ignore it as far as it would let us.

Wittmer was greatly interested in the new path.

"With such people as these," said Frederick, "the only thing to do is to give them as little ground for fight as possible. It's really their path I'm making—not ours—and any visitors who are inspired to go to them may now do so without even being seen by us. Perhaps that will give us a little peace in future."

Wittmer said in his dry way that he certainly hoped so, but the presence of this woman on the island seemed rather a guarantee of the reverse. He had plenty to tell us about his neighbors, but his reports were largely second-hand. He himself now kept out of their way as much as possible, but Frau Wittmer had become the bosom friend and inseparable companion of the Baroness. The young man, Philippson, he told us, had again received letters from home, saying that his mother's illness was very grave, and that she wished him to return. Lorenz had often told us how anxiety about his mother often depressed Philippson, who was devoted to her, and sometimes suffered agonies of homesickness.

One day, while Frederick was at work upon the path which Philippson's outbreak had forced him to make, he caught sight of Philippson himself not far away. He was sitting on a stone, the picture of desolation, with his head bowed in both hands, and his shoulders bent as though a fearful burden weighed upon them. A deep pity for him stirred in Frederick and made him want to

go up to this unhappy youth and talk to him like a father. Philippson must have heard the strokes of the machete, and known who it was who wielded it, and Frederick waited for a while to see whether he would look up or make some movement towards or away from him. He did nothing, but sat on as though unconscious of every sight and sound, as though the neighborhood of neither friend nor enemy could mitigate his dejection. Frederick considered the hopeless situation of this boy, comparing him with Lorenz, his companion in slavery. And his wide experience and great knowledge of such matters made him realize that there was nothing to be done for either of them, least of all for this one, whose passion for the woman was so absolute and so consuming that until it had burned itself out—if ever it did—he could never come back to his real life. So Frederick did not speak to him. He must have worked a good two hours longer. When he left, Philippson was still sitting on the stone, and had not moved.

Chapter XX: THE STAGE IS SET

As time went on, the strangeness of the atmosphere surrounding the Baroness and her household increased, until one found oneself moving in a maze of clues and counter-clues wherever her least action was concerned. Try as we might to keep ourselves withdrawn from all the petty sordidness she brought with her to our island, it was inevitable that we should become continually involved directly and indirectly in "situations." There were no more visits exchanged between Friedo and the "Hacienda Paradise," as she had dubbed her place, but on the other hand it proved possible to avoid open hostilities. Since Lorenz came no more, our chief source of news was Wittmer, with whom we very nearly quarreled, owing to the Baroness's inspiring him with the idea that it was most likely we who had stolen his boat. Perhaps it was because he found us so unmoved by this insinuation that Wittmer decided to examine more closely the incidents of all thefts of which he had been the victim. When he had done this, he could hardly escape the conclusion that the Baroness bore the guilt.

This led to a fresh scene, which ended in Wittmer's forbidding his wife to associate with the Baroness in any way in future. On one of Wittmer's visits he brought us two documents to look at, which he had found pinned on the barrel at Post Office Bay. Whether anyone but himself had seen them he could not say. They were written in German—rather stupid and ineffectual, I thought, considering that most callers would be more familiar with English or Spanish. One contained a formal charge against Frederick and me for having slandered the Baroness, and against Frederick for having refused to render her medical aid when called upon to do so. Needless to say, no such request had ever been made. The second document was an equally formal charge against Herr Wittmer, accusing him of trespassing upon her property, and of falsely accusing herself, her "husband," and their "comrade Lorenz," in the matter of certain goods (milk, lead, etc.) alleged to have been received by her in his behalf and not delivered.

Besides these, there was a "Wanted to Purchase" bill for four hundred sheets of corrugated iron, forty window frames, and hard-

ware. From this it was not hard to deduce the ambitious dwelling the Baroness had it in mind to build. For further information, contractors were requested to inquire at "Hotel Paradise Refound."

This public attack on Frederick and me naturally infuriated me at first, but afterwards I tried to treat it with the same indifference that Frederick did. Wittmer made it the more difficult to do this by informing us that we were the butt of much vituperation at the Baroness's camp, and that I especially was accused by her of much scandalous and highly vicious behavior. So far, I knew, she had not had much opportunity to spread such stories beyond her immediate and unimportant circle, but it was deeply humiliating and painful to me to think that acquaintances of ours might visit her when calling at the island, and perhaps believe the things she said. But there was nothing to do about it, and I could only hope that the good opinion of people who had found me otherwise would remain proof against her calumnies.

When we are enduring great physical suffering, depression takes more powerful hold upon us than when we are well, and at that time I was going through acute physical torment. My teeth had become so bad that they now had to be drawn, not one but all of them, and this with primitive instruments—for Frederick had not brought his dental equipment—and no anæsthetic whatever. Nor did we have a single pain-relieving drug. I shall never forget the agony I went through during those weeks and months. I had suffered a great deal of pain in my life, but nothing in comparison with this. It pulled me down until my resistance was utterly gone. I was too much of a wreck to profit by my own admonitions to myself, and all the weary assurances of my mind, telling me that this woman with her malignant attacks should be a touchstone of my power over myself, were like a voice heard talking words one can understand but has somehow lost the meaning of.

In the mental apathy and bodily torment of that period, I think I could have let myself be driven from the island and hardly known it. I felt utterly destroyed and desolate and it was only with the greatest effort that I was able to force myself to attend to the animals I was so fond of, and show them still the little marks of affection they were accustomed to receive from me. Dur-

ing all that time it was poor Frederick who went short, for I was literally incapable of following his work with the intensity of interest and mental clarity which it demanded. He felt this very much, for he had become used to discussing every point of his philosophy with me. It gave him ideas to be able to talk about these things, but now he had to do his morning's studying all alone, which he found very hard at first. My depleted strength made it also impossible to do much work in the garden, and what I could no longer manage fell to Frederick's share, overburdening and overtiring him. It was a miserable time.

As I have said, for a long while after Lorenz was taken back to favor by the Baroness, he never came to Friedo. Now suddenly one day he turned up again. He was alone, and I wondered whether he meant to renew the visits of the past. He looked very ill but had no complaints to make as before. He told us that he had just come from Post Office Bay. There was no reason why he should not have come from there, but instantly I knew that he was lying.

I do not know what the instinct was that developed in me about that time, but I constantly found myself involuntarily making observations which supported my unbelief of all these people. So now, I glanced at Lorenz, at his shoes, and they were innocent of any of the marks which the walk from Post Office Bay to Friedo must inevitably have left on them. They were quite clean, and had obviously not traversed any lava field that day. He wore a rucksack on his back and this was empty—a further proof that he had not been at the Bay, for no one of the Baroness's household ever went down there without having something to bring up from the Casa. I felt ashamed to be making these covert observations, and it embarrassed me further that the young man might have noticed something.

"The Baroness has no idea I'm here," he said.

"And I expect you'd better not let her find out, either," I answered, "or you'll be having trouble!"

"That wouldn't matter a damn to me any more," he said, and went on talking of more or less general things. But he dropped some clear hints now and then that there was a shortage of stores at the Refound Paradise, particularly of fresh fruits and vegetables,

which were even more of a necessity in that climate than bread. I think that I can say without boasting that I am not inhospitable, and Friedo's garden was showing a good crop of bananas and other desirable things just then. But all at once the hidden purpose of this visit dawned upon me, and I knew as positively as though I had participated in the whole scheme that Lorenz had been sent out by the Baroness to cadge my pity for his hungry state, and come back well provided from my garden. We had heard from Wittmer that she was a poor manager, having far too much one day and nothing at all the next. Her wastefulness and lack of skill in household management must have caused her menfolk many a pang of hunger; they were truly criminal traits in a place like Floreana. My disgust at the transparency of this revictualing trick enabled me to harden my heart, and although I supplied him with everything there was while he was in our house, he left with hands and rucksack as empty as when he came.

Frederick asked him how he was feeling, and he answered rather evasively. He said that he was getting better. He no longer wished to leave the island, but had decided to stay on. It was clear to see that he was far from happy, but now his whole manner expressed a terrible resignation, as of one who knew himself caught in toils of misery from which he could no longer even make an effort to free himself.

In May, the Ecuadorean government graciously consented at last to regard the several complaints which had been sent in by the settlers on Floreana and sent a high official to investigate matters and act as arbiter. This gentleman brought us the assurance that Friedo was ours as long as we cared to live there. Upon his request Frederick gave him an account of everything that had happened, very precise and impartial, but also very plain-spoken. The important visitor then called upon the Baroness but found her out. She had gone flamingo-hunting at one of the lagoons, for she was gathering a bird collection for the zoo of Floreana fauna, which was to be one of the attractions of the "Hacienda Paradise."

The government party left for other islands in the group and returned a few days later, when the plenipotentiary was received

by the Baroness in a manner befitting both his importance and her purposes.

Reliable information afterwards gave us to understand that whatever might happen in the future, one thing had now been made certain: the Baroness had secured the tenure of her property for as long as she cared. This she had bought at a price—as she herself boasted—and the representative of Ecuador had left the next day in high feather. It is true that the Baroness's hospitality had not brought her the title to forty hectares of land, which she had hoped to obtain, but only to the twenty allotted to all settlers alike. On the other hand, she had won in the dispute about the spring at Wittmers', which was declared free for the common use of both settlements. Now Wittmer would have the pleasure of being overrun by her and her men at all times, and with all impunity.

This decision could not fail to lead to open war between the two households at the caves, with mutual recriminations and all the other accompaniments of such a situation. We were infinitely grateful that Friedo was a good two hours away from all of them.

The Ecuadorean envoy was so pleased with the Baroness that he invited her to come to Chatham for a trip. She was delighted to accept, but very wisely, perhaps, took Philippson along with her. After some days the *Manuel y Cobos* brought her back. I could not help thinking, as I heard this, that that ancient and notorious bark could scarcely ever have carried a more appropriate passenger.

The returning Baroness had a surprise in store for us. The departure of Valdivieso had left her rather short-handed, so that when Wittmer told us she had brought a third man back with her we thought this only practical. What was our blank astonishment to learn that the new member of the Hacienda party was none other than the long-lost Arends, the youthful partner of Captain Bruuns, whom we had last seen a day or two before he set out in search of the ill-fated *Norge*.

We had heard from Indios of the tragic ending of that search, and of how Arends had wept beside his friend's grave; but none of these natives who returned from time to time to Floreana had ever been able to find out what had become of him after that, or even whether he was still alive. Since he had now come back to

the scene of his luckless fishing enterprise, his survival, at least, was certain, and we hoped that we should now see him again, and hear the story of his subsequent adventures. We had liked him very well in the old days.

Yes, the old days. Floreana had become another place since all the settlers had come, bringing with them to our island dissension, mistrust, envy, hatreds, all the mean and trifling pother of the world which they pretended to have put behind them.

But Arends never came. Even had Wittmer not told us the reason why, we should have known it—the Baroness had found another slave, and for every member of that household, free or bound, Friedo was forbidden territory.

Arends, we learned, occupied the position of the new favorite. She had met him on Chatham, and ostensibly hired him at a monthly wage of 80 sucres. As the new lover, however, the working clauses of his contract were not regarded very seriously, and the major portion of the daily labor fell, as before, to Lorenz. This, and other details of domestic life at the "Hacienda Paradise," were told us later by Lorenz himself, and in a manner which made it impossible not to accept them as true.

If Philippson retained the position of husband by night, Arends held it by day. Hardly a day went by but the Baroness and he set out on "hunting expeditions," returning very often with no bag at all, sometimes with only a piece or two.

Whatever the reasons that had brought Lorenz with the Baroness to Floreana, they were not all love. Doubtless she had him erotically in her power, but the prospect of retrieving the financial position she had ruined helped to lure him there. Not so Philippson. He had lost himself entirely to love. He had left everything for her sake; he would have followed her unquestioningly into the bottomless pit.

The advent of Arends was more than he could endure. Day after day, he was forced to watch this stranger supersede him in a thousand ways, until at last he broke out into one of those insensate passions of his—we had experienced one such paroxysm at Friedo—and hurled the whole of his rage and jealousy and wretchedness at the Baroness in one indescribable scene.

The woman struck him with her riding-whip, and his face bore a flaming weal for many days. On another occasion he stormed at her across the dinner table, and she took up her plate of boiling soup and flung it at him, scalding him badly. Without so much as waiting to find out whether the hot stuff had seriously injured his eyes, as even Lorenz, his enemy, feared, she went away with Arends, and was seen no more that day.

Lorenz was still a very sick man. The mysterious disease had not killed him, but had robbed him of his whole vitality and strength, so that he could only drag himself painfully from task to task. They seldom left him time to rest; he was quite done for, but so apathetic that he now no longer even planned escape. The situation created by the new lover brought him fresh torment, for Philippson, helpless against the woman, vented his fury upon the still more helpless Lorenz. He stood over the toiler like a brutal overseer. When Lorenz flagged, he beat him savagely; he allowed him neither food nor drink; he treated him as he must have longed to treat the stranger, Arends.

This was the Baroness's Floreana, a place where cruelty and evil passions could run wild, because there was no "world," with police and public opinion, to check their worst excesses. Satan had come to Eden with this woman, who called her hacienda "Paradise."

Chapter XXI: HIT AND MISS

THE GENERAL INVITATION TO THE "HACIENDA PARADISE," posted on the barrel at the bay, brought numerous visitors to the place. They would call at Friedo afterwards and tell us many a curious story of what they had experienced there. Thus we learned that Lorenz was no longer cavalier-in-waiting; he had evidently been degraded in rank, for he was now addressing the Baroness by her title, no longer as "darling," as when they had come to Friedo on that first day. This form of address was exacted of him only while visitors were present. Philippson was still given out as the husband, and Arends was the hired man.

Callers at the "Hacienda Paradise" did not find the Baroness in the garden to receive them. Her men performed this office, took the names and went indoors to ask whether Madame would care to see the strangers. If she was so disposed, the visitors were then admitted to her presence. It was a kind of royal audience.

The Baroness received reclining on a divan in riding dress—shirt, breeches, and high boots, and the riding-whip that never left her hand. The excessive condescension of her manner would have fitted the Empress of the World, not merely of the Galapagos; but for all this, most of the visitors came away charmed with her cultivated manner and worldly graces, and looked upon her as an eccentric denizen of the *grand monde*. As I have said, the Baroness was a truly superb actress.

It happened now and then that she was caught by strangers in a less favorite rôle than that of the Circe of the islands. Once a party surprised her in the midst of a strenuous washing day. It was unusual for her to do any manner of work, but the inexperienced and clumsy hands of men are somewhat hard on fragile clothes and such, therefore it did happen from time to time that she did a little laundry. On this occasion, the visitors found a very different Baroness, hot and disheveled, and, at least for a moment, furious at having been taken unawares. She may have retreated in scattered order, but when she emerged again she was splendidly mistress of the situation and herself. She could afford to treat the accident with humor, for a greater transformation between the

laundress and the empress could hardly be imagined. She had on much the same costume as when we saw her the first day she arrived, and she made on these guests, as on me, an impression of grace and smartness. The only difference was that her hair had lost its blondness and had now gone back to its natural dark color, for her supply of dye had run out, and Chatham had been unable to accommodate her with a new store.

But dark hair suited her at least as well, and I should not mention so trivial a detail as this were it not that it seemed to me neither accidental nor quite significant that this woman, as she moved from the invented melodrama of her life towards the true one of her death, gradually reverted to her natural appearance.

In European papers the "Galapagos story" still cropped up again from time to time, though now it was not concerned merely with Friedo and its peaceful occupants. Lurid reports of the Baroness's doings had also got about—some, as I shall later show, spread by herself.

Especially since her visit to Chatham, Floreana had become an inexhaustible theme of gossip among the islands. The Baroness had had a free hand describing her fellow-settlers to the Chatham people, and had not failed to profit by this opportunity to the full. She had also made the most of her chance to tell about herself in the most alluring way. This, together with the stories of fishermen who called from time to time, to say nothing of the impression which the Stampa episode created in the course of sensational repetitions, had all made Floreana appear to the other islanders in the most extraordinary light. Now there gathered on the scene the persons in another drama only slightly less dark than the main plot slowly moving towards its merciless dénouement.

One Nuggerud, the Norwegian skipper of a fishing-smack from Santa Cruz, brought a young German journalist to Floreana. This youth had heard great tales of the doings at the Hacienda and could not rest until he had seen things with his own eyes. He landed at Black Beach and called at Friedo first. We asked him, as it was rather late in the afternoon and the Hacienda was a good two hours away, whether he would like to spend the night with us and go on to the Baroness's and the Wittmers' in the morning. He accepted

our invitation eagerly, and we showed him over our plantation, which was looking very thriving just then.

We were all standing talking in the garden when a call came to our ears. I turned round, and to my great surprise there stood Arends at our fence. Frederick and I hastened over to him, very pleased that he had finally decided to break his bonds so far as to come and call upon us. We felt almost rebuffed at the scared uneasiness with which he hesitantly responded to our cordial greeting. It was as though he hardly dared admit that he had known us before, and this seemed to me the more unnatural for the fact that he was quite alone. The Baroness must have got him as completely in her power as she had the other two. There was no other way to account for his state of panic.

He asked us with mysterious haste whether it was not Nuggerud who had put in at Black Beach that afternoon. We told him that it was, then asked about himself and why he had never come to see us. Although it was impossible not to notice the prohibition that had been laid upon him, we nevertheless asked him to come in. Hardly had the invitation left Frederick's lips when a slight cough sounded from the bushes a few feet away from the fence, and there I saw the Baroness glowering at us. The thicket only half concealed her, as she stood with arms folded like a Satanic overseer, keeping baleful watch. There was something so sinister in her expression and in her attitude that a cold chill ran down my back. The slave, Arends, obeyed the warning and the summons. With a hurried word of farewell to us, he was gone. We watched them moving off together, then turned and exchanged a look which told each other more than words.

We had both seen and heard more menacing things about the Baroness than this. In itself it was a trivial scene, but somehow it seemed to tell more about her and her whole life on Floreana than anything had ever done before. It is not often that one knows at what particular moment one becomes aware of the inevitability of certain future happenings, but this was one of those rare moments; as I turned and went back to our guests, I knew that dire events were on the way, violence and death—and for the first time vague

and ominous presentiments which I had felt before crystallized into a foreboding of murder.

The next morning the young journalist went to the "Hacienda Paradise" and called at Friedo for a moment on his way back to Black Beach. He said little, but it needed no words to show us that the Baroness had made another conquest. There was nothing surprising in this; we only thought it a pity. Nothing has ever shown me more plainly than the story of the Baroness that the gullibility of people is the greatest encouragement and incentive to the evil in the world. The victims walk so cheerfully and willingly into the traps set for them; not only do they not avoid them, they seek them out and are not to be withdrawn from them by any warnings either from the outside or from their own sane instinct within. It often seems that it is not wickedness that harms, only credulity.

The journalist told us that the Baroness had tried hard to prevent him from going to the Wittmers'. He had not taken her efforts seriously but said he was determined not to leave the island without having visited other settlers. Thereupon she had put as good a face as possible upon the situation, and offered to act as his guide. Ordinarily this would have seemed hardly necessary, since the Wittmers' house was only a stone's throw from the Hacienda, but the Baroness had a plan. She had taken him, as she promised, to the caves, but they were different caves from where the Wittmers lived. When they had got there, he had looked round and asked where the house was, and she had answered with a thrilling account of how recent floods had made it impossible to visit her neighbors. He had only laughed, and when she saw she could not have her way she simply left him and went home again. When he got to the Wittmers' it was, of course, to find that there was no trace whatever of an inundation. But this did not disturb him; he only thought it amusing.

A few weeks later this young man returned, together with a friend. It was not Nuggerud but the *Cobos* that brought him. There was no accident in this. Like a bird of ill-omen, the *Cobos* came to Floreana whenever evil was due. The ancient, sinful craft

had changed its name but to us she was and could ever be only the *Manuel y Cobos* of yore.

That day I watched her put in at Black Beach, moving with that kind of heavy stealthiness that made her look so sinister and guilty. Though a new skipper was her master now, to me she was still Bruuns' ship, that knew and kept his secrets and the secrets of Watkins and Cobos—and who knows how many other of their kind? It was no mere fancy of mine that whenever the *Cobos* came, something untoward was brewing for the island, and as I saw a rowing-boat put out from its side I wondered whom it could be bringing, what new character was being introduced upon our stage.

I did not have to wonder long, for very soon the young journalist was introducing his friend to us. I think I have never seen a handsomer young man. I took his age to be about the latter twenties. He was very tall and had wavy blond hair, and the bluest eyes imaginable. It was clear to see what would occur when the Baroness set eyes upon him. At the same time, I was convinced that the appeal in this case would be all on one side, for there was something so frank and normal about this young man, he was so much the reverse of the good-looking weaklings with whom the Baroness surrounded herself, that I was sure he would not fall a victim to her wiles. Both Frederick and I found him delightful and it pleased us greatly, too, to see that the other young man, after his momentary and superficial enthusiasm for the mistress of the Hacienda, seemed now to have cast off all that foolish dazzlement and become as sane and nice again as he had been on his first visit to Friedo. The two young men had made friends with a fellow-passenger, a young Ecuadorean soldier who had been sent to Floreana to bring us our mail. Since the Baroness had tampered with our post, the Ecuadorean authorities kindly sent it all by special messenger.

The trio stayed with us that night, and on the morning of the second day set out for the caves and for a visit to the Baroness. We had invited them to make Friedo their home for the few days they were to spend on Floreana, until the *Cobos* should return to pick them up. They went off, saying that they would be back

again for supper, and Frederick and I went with them to the gate. As they left, one of them turned back with a laugh and said, "Be sure to expect us—we'll not be sleeping three in a bed elsewhere!" Later on I had good reason to remember that remark.

The day passed in work and study, and towards evening I began to prepare a hearty supper for our guests. I took much pride in showing how our plantation could perform in this respect, and these young men had pleased us both so much that I was more than usually anxious to do my kitchen's best by them. The sun was getting low, and there was still no sight of them. A year before we should have been extremely anxious about them, for it was not hard then to lose one's way between the caves and Friedo, but since then good paths had come into existence, and many visitors had used them. Certain trees and groups of rocks had become familiar landmarks, so that even by moonlight it was fairly safe going. The wild animals that came down to drink at Friedo's spring used other routes; and besides, there was no danger of their ever attacking people. The ghost of Watkins held terrors only for Indios, and would not frighten two stalwart young Germans and an Ecuadorean soldier. So we were not alarmed lest some mishap had overtaken the three; perhaps we were slightly annoyed that they failed to appear when we had made the most hospitable preparations for them that we could.

It was night before we sat down to the spurned supper, which we enjoyed the less for having expected to share it with those pleasant guests of whom the Baroness apparently had cheated us.

It was now late. We had invited them to spend the night, and having had no message to the contrary, we felt that hospitality demanded our preparing sleeping accommodations for them, in case one or three should come back, after all. We therefore laid out mattresses and bedclothes, and then we went to bed.

I do not know how long I had been asleep when we were suddenly aroused by footsteps rushing, stumbling up the path towards the house. Without even waiting to light the lantern, we jumped out of bed to find out who it was, hastily throwing something over our nightclothes, for it was very cool.

It was the journalist. It was more than the pale moonlight that

made him look so ghastly; he had obviously been running all the way from wherever he had been and his face wore an expression of desperate alarm.

"An accident!" he gasped. "There's been an accident!" Frederick meanwhile had fetched the lantern and lit it. I thought immediately that something must have happened to his friend, but before I could ask the question Frederick had done so.

"No," was the answer. "It's Arends! He's been shot!"

"Shot?" I said, a thousand awful possibilities storming in upon me. "How?"

"We were out hunting," the journalist replied. "Will you come, Doctor?"

But Frederick had not waited to be asked. At calls like this, all the physician in him immediately revived, and almost before one knew it, he was dressed and ready, with his instruments and medical supplies collected and packed, as though a midnight call still belonged to his familiar daily round. He hesitated just a moment, however, remembering the Lorenz episode and how the Baroness refused to have him called.

"That household doesn't usually consult me," he said to the young man. "Were you asked to come?"

"No, damn it, I wasn't," said the other fiercely. "She didn't want me to. But I don't pay any attention to rot like that. He's been shot to blazes, so the less she says the better. For God's sake come on, Doctor, though I shouldn't wonder if it's too late already!"

With a confused word of apology to me for the disturbance, he went away with Frederick. I heard the gate of Friedo shut, and listened to their footsteps, until these were lost in the clamor of the Floreana night.

I went back to my bed in the "cage," but there was no more sleep for me that night. Try as I would, I could not force out of my mind the conviction that if Arends had been shot, not accident but purpose underlay the act. I thought at once of Philippson, driven at last through jealousy to a sudden, or even premeditated, death of violence. It would not be hard to arrange—the Baroness's many hunting expeditions would offer ample opportunity to a man bent on ridding himself of an enemy.

The cattle-hunting on Floreana was no hunting in the proper sense. One simply waited till the herd appeared, picked out one's beast and shot at it. It was mere child's play, and totally lacking in danger except in such rare cases as the bull-and-Hugo episode. Pig-sticking might have been another matter, but this was not the Baroness's sport.

The more I thought about this shooting, the more suspicious it appeared to me, and once I had begun to consider it in all its sinister implications, I was seized with anxiety for Frederick's fate up there among those people. I knew the Baroness disliked him now, and suddenly it seemed to me that in his readiness to help he had deliberately placed himself in mortal danger.

For the first time in months I experienced a repetition of all the terrors that beset me in our early days, whenever he went off alone about the island. I realized with a kind of shock that I had always, at the back of my mind, harbored a fatal fore-knowledge that something would happen to Frederick on Floreana, and that he would never leave the island alive.

I could not stay in bed, but got up and dressed, holding myself in readiness for any call or message that might come. My impulse was to find my way alone to where the shooting had occurred, but on reflection I soon realized that this would be foolish and could serve no purpose.

The excited journalist had not said where the accident took place. One gathered it was on the *pampa*, but it might also have been in the bush. Nor was there any knowing whether the wounded man still lay where he had been shot down, or whether they had taken him back to the Baroness's, or to the Wittmers', or even into Watkins' cave. Hindered by lameness, I could not hope to get there in less than several hours, and in the meantime Frederick might come or send for me.

Therefore I stayed at home, a prey to direst forebodings, and in unbearable suspense. Never had the noises of the Friedo night so tortured me as then. Listening as intently as I did, with every nerve strained to catch the slightest echo of a human footstep, the trampling of the wild cattle, the braying of the asses, the howling

of the wild dogs, and all the other nightly din made it impossible to distinguish a step until it was close upon one.

After what seemed an age of waiting they returned—Frederick, the journalist, his friend, and the Ecuadorean soldier. I could have wept with the relief of seeing them safe and sound.

Frederick, I noticed, was very silent, but the other three were burning to tell me their story, which I was no less anxious to hear. It did not come out as clearly as I shall try and give it, for each one had seen it from a different angle, but when it had all been told it left one wondering in stunned amazement how such things could be.

It seemed that they had got to the "Hacienda Paradise" about lunch time and found a scene of domestic harmony. Lorenz and Philippson were darning moth-holes in their evening suits; Arends was working in the garden. As described before, the Baroness was at the wash-tub. The men could see that the moment she caught sight of the handsome stranger his fate, so far as she was concerned, was sealed. She made this so obvious that the journalist, with a presence of mind which told of much experience, introduced his friend as his future brother-in-law. This little subterfuge failed, however, to quench the light of the chase in the Baroness's eye.

After lunch, the two young Germans expressed a desire to call on the Wittmers. They paid their visit, returning to the Hacienda about four o'clock, thanked the Baroness for her hospitality, and were about to leave in order to get back to Friedo well in time for supper. But the lady would not hear of this. She put on the most disappointed air in the world, and said they were spoiling her whole fine plan to take them on a little shooting expedition to the *pampa*. It was quite near, she pointed out, and she had so looked forward to it; she had even had her gun cleaned and made all the arrangements while they were away.

The three young men could not refuse without being positively boorish, and though they feared that they would be keeping us waiting for our supper, they could not but go, as they were asked to watch the Baroness display her prowess as a marksman.

All the way up she kept close to the handsome visitor at her side, exerting her well-tried wiles upon him. Her voice became a

little sharper and her advances more deliberate as she saw that he seemed proof against her charms; something fierce and edged came into her manner then which startled the young journalist, who was watching her closely. His friend was well aware of everything and rather amused than otherwise. The Baroness had met her match in him and he, seeing this, rather enjoyed the game.

Suddenly she began to talk to them of us. She said it was very foolish of them to waste the few days they would be on Floreana down at Friedo, where there was nothing to do and only those Ritters to talk to. Her further descriptions of us were interrupted by the arrival of the party at the *pampa.*

For the moment the herds were not in sight, but they were sure to appear immediately, for late afternoon was the time they were always on the plain. Pending their appearance, the Baroness arranged her forces, as she called it.

The three visitors and Arends were to stay together in a group; Philippson was posted a considerable distance away; she herself took up a position at an angle from Philippson, some fifty meters farther down the field. The herd, when it appeared, stood in a compact group, at an equal distance from all of them, some hundred meters ahead.

The hunters were variously armed. Arends and the soldier had rifles, the Baroness a shot-gun of light caliber. The two young Germans both carried revolvers, perhaps in some vague spirit of adventure, but certainly never thinking they would need them on the island. The Baroness arranged that she would give the signal to shoot, when she had picked out the member of the herd she wished to bring down.

The signal came. Two shots rang out, one from the Ecuadorean's rifle. Meanwhile the positions of the four young men had altered slightly, Arends having moved up to a spot practically abreast with the journalist's friend. Philippson had stayed where he was, well off to one side.

The herd scattered and ran; neither shot seemed to have taken any effect. Suddenly Arends, who had knelt down to take aim, was seen to stagger to his feet, and then collapse. The three beside him gathered round and Philippson rushed up. The Baroness had

apparently not noticed that anything was wrong. She began quite calmly and without haste to saunter towards the horrified group. One of them called out, "Arends is shot!" Even in the midst of all their agitation they were astounded at her answer:

"What! *Arends?*"

For a noticeable moment, astonishment clearly overcame every other emotion in the Baroness; then she flung herself down beside the motionless Arends, embracing him and calling him endearing names.

She turned to the journalist and said, "You did it with your revolver!" But this had not been fired.

"Who did shoot, then?" she asked sharply, and the Ecuadorean answered that he had obeyed the signal that she had given; at the same instant the second shot had hit the wounded man.

"It wasn't that shot that hit him," said the Baroness—"you did it yourself. Your bullet must have ricochetted and done this to him."

"I'm going to fetch Dr. Ritter," said the journalist as the debate threatened to become endless. "We must get him up here at once!"

"Nothing of the kind!" the Baroness objected. "I can look after him perfectly well myself. My medical training is quite enough for that and I don't want any other doctor. It's not necessary. We'll take him home and I'll have him all fixed up in no time."

But the appearance of the wounded man was sufficiently alarming to cause her to reconsider this boast, and after a while she said with bad grace, "Well, go and get him if you must!" and immediately returned to Arends. Again she began caressing him and calling him endearing names.

When Frederick arrived, she tore herself away from Arends and seemed to wait in some suspense for the verdict. The bullet had grazed the arm and entered the abdomen. There was no fever and apparently but little pain. But on no account, Frederick said, must the man be moved, for the bullet had lodged in a critical place, and there was great danger of peritonitis setting in unless the patient was kept absolutely quiet and, as far as possible, in one position.

He would have to lie out where he was, on the open *pampa*, until his condition made it possible to move him. When the *Cobos*

came back to fetch the others, he must be sent with it to Guayaquil and taken at once to a hospital. Meanwhile, he must be nursed where he was and Frederick would try to see to it that no dangerous complications set in.

In a flash, the Baroness had switched over into the new rôle. She ordered Philippson to go and fetch whatever was necessary, and declared that she herself would stay and nurse the wounded man, and never leave his side until the boat came.

Frederick, tired of these theatricals, turned to the others and asked what had happened. They gave him a true account, each relating what he himself had heard or seen of the incident. The Baroness now broke in upon the narrative, declaring that the unlucky shot had been fired by the journalist or the Ecuadorean, but Frederick brushed these protests aside.

"This is impossible," he said. "Not only did this shot come from a greater distance, but the angle at which it struck does not coincide with the positions of either of these two men. Moreover, I can tell by the nature of the wounds that they were caused neither by a revolver nor by a rifle."

At this the Baroness gave up this pretense in favor of another. With a gesture that would not have disgraced a tragedy queen she thrust her gun towards Frederick, crying:

"Take it—take it away! I shall never shoot again!"

Then she turned back to Arends, and flung herself again upon the ground beside him.

"Darling, forgive me!"

The next moment, however, she had again plunged into new explanations as to how the accident happened. As usual, each thing she said belied the last, so that it was impossible not to deduce the truth.

They then saw clearly that the quarry she had meant to take home that day was the handsome and reluctant Joseph, whom she had not been able to win by other means. Precisely in the same manner as she had told us once she "tamed" the wild dogs of the island, she had thought to tame the unwilling lover. She had meant to wound him in the leg, slightly but enough to prevent his spending the remainder of his stay on Floreana at Friedo with the Rit-

ters. She was too good a shot to fear that she might miss, but not so good a clairvoyant as to foresee that Arends would choose that moment to move, and receive in a much more dangerous place the comparatively innocent shot intended for his rival of a day.

Frederick gave orders that Arends' temperature be taken carefully at certain intervals and his condition noted; every morning some one from the Hacienda was to come and report to him at Friedo how the night was. This duty devolved upon Philippson, for Lorenz was still being kept away from us.

The next day Philippson duly appeared. I had no wish to see him, so kept myself out of sight behind a curtain. I was curious to know how he would carry off his difficult assignment, face to face with the three strangers, whose singular experience with the Baroness might have ended tragically for one of them. He clung to the rôle of husband and referred to the Baroness as "my wife." His clumsy loyalty to the woman misled him into saying foolish things.

"My wife was aiming at a calf," he said. "I can't understand it. I've never known her to miss before!" He turned to the Ecuadorean soldier. "It is impossible!" he repeated. "It can only have been you who hit him."

"We won't go into that again," said Frederick, looking very grave. "Of course I understand how you feel on Frau von Wagner's account, but there's not the slightest doubt whatever as to how the whole thing happened, and it is, moreover, easily proven."

Poor Philippson looked despairing.

"I suppose I'll have to break it to my wife," he said, "but she'll never stand it. It's terrible—it's terrible!" His anguish was really pitiable and showed the whole sincerity of his love.

But the young Adonis, whose charms had been to blame for the whole affair, was not so sympathetic.

"I wish I'd seen what she was up to," he said dryly, "I'd have shot at her myself."

Day after day went by without a sign of the *Cobos*. The accident on the *pampa* completely disarranged our lives at Friedo. Every day Frederick had to make the long and toilsome way to his

patient and back, and at home I had the three young men incessantly on my hands.

What made it worse was the state of mind they were all in, nervous and completely out of sorts—the shooting had given them all a bad shock, and none of them, with the exception of the young Ecuadorean soldier, thought of helping me with my work. The young journalist reproached himself for having brought his friend; the friend felt somehow guilty because another man had been hit in his stead. One could see by the way in which they both scanned the empty sea sometimes for hours together that they were longing for the ship to come and take them off this hateful island.

But it was the young Ecuadorean who roused my greatest sympathy. He was not eager for the *Cobos* to arrive. He went about in anxious silence, turning over and over in his mind how he could get his neck out of the noose the Baroness was determined to put it in, if ever an investigation into the circumstances of the shooting should be undertaken by the Ecuadorean authorities. There had been gossip enough to make him well aware that the Baroness was a favored person, whose word would be taken before his, and even before Dr. Ritter's. I too was very doubtful of his chances before a court if Arends were to die, which seemed at that time probable. It was no light thing, at the outset of one's life, to stand exposed to a charge of manslaughter without a single witness one could call to prove one's innocence; for although two others had been present next to him, these were both his friends, and their evidence would be disqualified as biased. I tried to cheer him up as best I could, and I think that he was grateful for my efforts, for he found a hundred little ways of showing this in those helpful small attentions which say so much when words come less readily.

At last, after five long days of waiting, the *Cobos* put in at Black Beach. She came late in the afternoon, while Frederick was with Arends. He had to be fetched to Friedo to talk to the first officer, who had been informed of the accident and was waiting at Friedo to consult with him about it. When Frederick came, he showed the officer the sketch of the scene of the mishap which he had taken the precaution to make when they had first fetched him.

The *Cobos* had to sail that night, so there was little time to be lost in getting Arends placed upon a stretcher and taken to the beach. His condition had not grown worse and it was now possible to move him, though not to set him on his feet. A ladder was brought in from the garden and we tied a mattress onto it, a very primitive litter for so sick a man, but Floreana offered nothing better. By this time it had grown dark, and the bearers set off in the moonlight for the *pampa*.

At midnight the journalist and his friend came back, and told us that the stretcher party was on the way. They described the scene out on the *pampa* when the officer arrived.

The Baroness, realizing that Arends could not be sent to Guayaquil without some member of the Hacienda household to accompany him, had arranged for Lorenz to go. He was there, all prepared and dressed for the departure. The officer, however, had quite a different plan. He was very stern and entirely impervious to the lady's emotions, hardly listening to what she said. He asked only one simple question, indicating Philippson and Lorenz.

"Which of these two men was witness to the shooting?"

She had to admit that it was Philippson.

"Then he is to come with us," said the officer.

The Baroness begged and pleaded, but it was no use. She said she could on no account remain without Philippson, that she would send him over to Guayaquil later, if necessary, but could not spare him now. She seemed to have some desperate reason for keeping Philippson there, the young men said. They could not tell whether jealousy made her afraid to let him go alone, or whether she feared to be alone with Lorenz.

The officer disregarded everything she said, and simply repeated that Philippson must go.

Then to the unbounded amazement of everybody present, Lorenz, who had been standing absolutely silent, burst into an almost insane frenzy of protest at not being allowed to go as Arends' escort. He raved, as though more than his life depended on his getting off the island, and as though this were the only chance of his ever doing so. He wept, he cursed, he implored the man on his knees to take him.

The Baroness had failed to perturb the officer of the *Cobos*, but the wild revolt that suddenly blazed out of Lorenz, as unexpected as it was uncontrollable, moved them all profoundly.

"We thought the Hacienda was a kind of joke," said the young journalist. "But we have found out that it is at least three tragedies." He little knew how truly he spoke.

They said that there had been an almost horrible grotesqueness in the close of the strange scene upon the *pampa*. When it became certain that not Lorenz but Philippson would have to go, the two men had had to exchange clothes there and then.

The Hacienda's elegance and good equipment were evidently falling into quick decay, if these once well-dressed cavaliers had come down to a single suit between them. This was a great surprise to me, for I had gained the impression, when I was there, that they had come to Floreana with means enough among them to keep up their original style for at least two or three years.

At last they came. The Baroness was her old self no longer. She looked ten years older, her face was drawn and pale and deeply lined. It was the first time I had seen her without make-up. Her manner, too, was for the moment at least completely altered. She was almost humble. She had assumed the expression of a penitent and had adapted every gesture and inflection to the exigencies of this new rôle.

At the risk of repeating it once too often, I am compelled to say again that the world missed a great actress in the Baroness. It went through my mind that this woman might be the cause of the murder of everyone on Floreana, and yet be able to play upon popular sympathy. I thought of that other day—it seemed not months, but years and years ago—when, looking at her sitting at my table, I had thought she was capable of anything. But Lorenz had lived. She had let him live, but what must his life have been for him to have enacted that scene of wild despair upon the *pampa* before all those strangers?

She came to me with the expression of a holy martyr and held out her hand in silence. I took it, adding a friendly word which was not merely formal. I felt sincere sympathy for a trouble which I could not think was all feigned.

Amid general farewells the party then left Friedo. As the stretcher was set down at the gate before beginning its rough way down to the beach, I brought another pillow to put under Arends' head, and said good-by to him, devoutly hoping that his young life had not been sacrificed to a cheap and foolish gesture. I was convinced that Floreana would never see him again.

But what I did not know at that time was that in removing him from the island with an alarming though not mortal injury, a kind fate was sparing him from the violent end which must have been his had he stayed.

Chapter XXII: DEPOSED

THE *Cobos* WAS GONE AGAIN, AND APART FROM HOPING that Arends would recover and thus relieve the poor young Ecuadorean soldier of his fears, the shooting episode, so far as Frederick and I were concerned, was over. But we were not to be allowed to put it out of our minds for long. One afternoon Frederick came to me where I was working in the garden, with a look of more than mere displeasure on his face.

"The Baroness and Lorenz are here," he said.

"What do they want? Must we see them?"

"They're standing at the gate," said Frederick, "I haven't asked them in and I don't want to."

"Neither do I," I answered. "We'll stay here until they go away again."

"They've brought us some gifts," Frederick went on, "I suppose to thank me for looking after Arends, but I don't wish to accept the things or have anything more to do with those people. I shall wait inside until they have gone away."

Thereupon he went into the house, though he hesitated for a moment, for it was the first time that we had ever refused to open the gate of Friedo to visitors, and in a way it hurt him to do so now. But I too was determined not to have that woman near us any more. On the night when Arends had been taken away I had felt sympathy for her, sensing a real distress beneath all the play-acting of grief and repentance. But I had had time to think the matter over more dispassionately since, and had come for the dozenth time to the conclusion that the less association there was between Friedo and the "Hacienda Paradise," the better it would be for all concerned. Everything the Baroness represented in her person was what I most disliked and rejected in life. I would make a clean break now, especially since no quarrel had led to it, with the small resentments that these things leave behind. As I turned to follow Frederick into the house I could not refrain from looking towards the gate just once. There stood the Baroness with Lorenz. I saw the yellow brightness of a pumpkin which he held across his arms, evidently a present from the Hacienda's garden.

How long they stood there I do not know, but we gave them plenty of time. When I went out again to the gate, I found the large pumpkin in fragments on the ground. Though I had not been there to see, I knew as well as though I had witnessed the whole outburst that, after seeing we would not receive her, the Baroness had dashed the huge thing out of Lorenz's arms with such force that its thick rind smashed to bits. In my mind's eye I could see her going off in a high fury. But I little guessed how dearly I was going to pay for our inhospitality.

Then one day suddenly my Burro was missing. This was not the season that he usually preferred to spend out on the *pampa* with his family; on the contrary, he had been coming back to his corral every night and was very often at Friedo during the day as well. I knew that some mischief was afoot.

One day as we were near the caves on our way to the grove of wild oranges, we heard a voice behind us calling Frederick's name. It was the Baroness, all friendliness.

"Oh, Dr. Ritter," she said, "there's been a stray donkey at the Hacienda lately. I wonder if it could be yours. Of course he's done a little work for us, but you surely won't mind that, will you?"

Frederick answered as though he had not noticed the malice in the voice; it had been very plain to me.

"Just turn him loose, then, and if it's Burro, he'll come back home again. He knows the way."

When we got back to Friedo, Burro was there. But he did not greet me as before with the joyful braying for which he was so celebrated. I found him in his pen, standing all sadly and forlorn, and when he turned and looked at me, I could have wept to see the desolate expression in his eyes. I hurried over to him and said consoling words, caressing him and offering him fresh green things to eat. But he would touch nothing. He seemed broken and apathetic. Only his look spoke of the suffering he had been through.

Then I saw how the woman must have treated him. His soft gray fur had been literally sweated off, and the skin was raw and broken where the ropes had rubbed him till the blood came. It was plain to see that he had been unmercifully put to work, transporting things far too heavy for so old an animal, and it was no

less clear that they had maltreated him abominably in other ways. It was long since he had done any work for us. We thought him too old, and simply kept him because we were fond of him. Many days went by before I got my Burro back to a semblance of his own self, and I was happy then to see him going off and coming home again as he always used to do.

It would not have been possible to keep him tied up without making him still more unhappy, for I knew how he would miss his family. Sometimes I saw him with his wife and their newest baby burro, obviously trying to persuade her to come by daylight to his home at Friedo. He would convince her partially, and she would come a little way, only to draw back finally as though she could not bring herself to share his trust in us. But in the mornings I could often see that she and the baby had been there with him at night. No, I felt I could not shut my Burro up. Had I known what was still in store for him, I should certainly have done so.

He disappeared again. I listened for him night after night, but something told me he was gone this time forever. And so he was. Still, hoping against hope, we would lie awake, straining our ears to catch the familiar click of his corral gate as he went in, and his sonorous voice in the nightly chorus of wild asses at the spring. We would have recognized that voice among a hundred others, but we were never to hear him again.

Our old enemy, the giant boar, after a period of truce, had begun anew his depredations in our garden, doing damage which took us weeks repairing. Though the old fence he used to trudge alongside on his former raids had long been torn down, he was beating a new trail precisely on the site of his old path, which was now in the very center of our extended garden. One night, hearing suspicious noises at the sugar-cane, Frederick crept out with his gun and shot in the direction of the thief. I went out after him, glad to think we might be rid of our old adversary at last, and saw Frederick coming through the moonlight carrying a curious burden over his shoulder. It was a baby donkey, no more than a few days old. Frederick was dreadfully distressed at having deprived the little creature of its mother by mistaking her for

the wild boar, and this made him more than ever determined to carry on the fight against the invincible opponent.

We brought the donkey baby into the house. He was a charming creature. I named him Fleck, because of a black spot he wore upon his nose. His large dark eyes looked at me full of confidence, and reminded me so sadly of the Burro I had lost that I could have wept.

The little Fleck thrived wonderfully, and I adored him. He was bright and playful, and much cleverer than my Burro. When one day it occurred to me that this must certainly be Burro's own child, I loved him all the more. On the night we shot Fleck's mother, Burro had been missing for a long time. His family, well knowing where he was to be found, must have come looking for him. It could only have been they, for no other wild donkey ever came near a settler's place, not even to us, though by that time we rather flattered ourselves that among the wild animals on Floreana we stood in good repute.

Little Fleck was indeed a joy and a consolation, but I never ceased to miss and mourn my Burro, and one day I asked Wittmer if he could perhaps tell me anything about him. If he had been made the victim of the Baroness's spite against us, the evil that had certainly befallen him must have happened in Wittmer's immediate vicinity. It is true that Burro was old, and donkeys, like many other animals, always go into solitude to die, but somehow I knew that Burro died no natural death. My suspicion was more than confirmed by the look of confusion which came over Wittmer's face; as he turned away, saying that he knew nothing about a missing donkey, his expression was so strange that I did not press the matter. But I knew that one day he would be able to tell us what had happened.

On Christmas day he came to Friedo with a present of a large turtle. He said its name was Isidore and that it was quite tame. He had bought it, he said, to take my Burro's place. I thought it very odd that he should do this, for he knew that Burro's child had succeeded him at Friedo. But the gift convinced me that Wittmer had willingly or unwillingly been implicated in my Burro's disappearance. My feeling towards Wittmer changed. He was obvi-

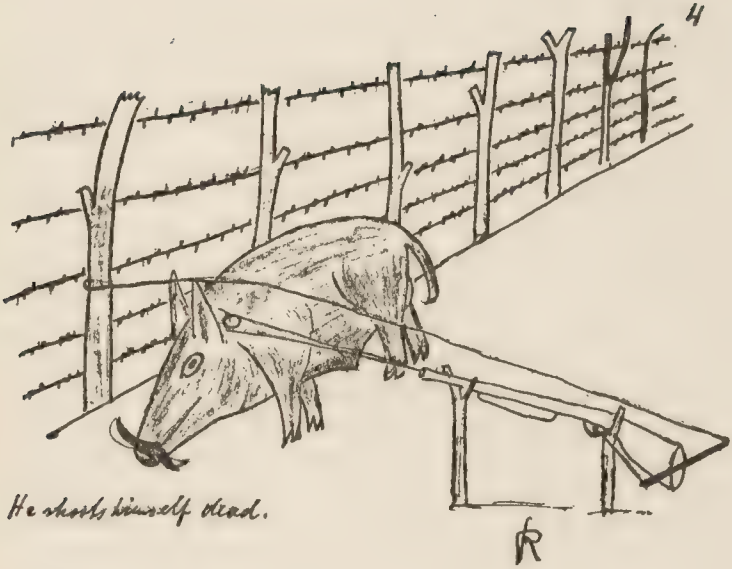
ously concealing something from us, and I felt that Burro's disappearance was not the only secret he could have revealed to us if he had wanted to.

The devil-pig had cost our little Fleck his mother, but this was to be the last misdeed of his earthly career. Frederick set up still another trap to catch him in, a clever and murderous arrangement, simpler than the others, with a rifle trained to hit a vital spot. The pig must automatically release the trigger as he lumbered down the familiar path. This time it worked. In the morning we found him dead at last.

He was dead but not vanquished, for now there occurred in quick succession one sinister event after another. It was impossible not to think that the demon which had assumed the form of the great boar was pursuing us with redoubled malice. The time had come already when we looked back, as on a period of long-vanished peace, upon the days when the old raider had been our only enemy. Since then far worse had come, greater harm, greater treachery. By shooting him we must have forced whatever demon had inhabited his form to assume another guise. But we never recognized its incarnations. We only knew that drought and misfortune, violence and murder, followed the old boar's death—and who is there so rational as to assert that all these things were not connected?

I have already said that since the advent of the Baroness newspaper interest in Floreana had, to our gratification, veered from us to her. We used to read the accounts of "Hacienda Paradise" in various papers of the world, and sometimes smile at the crudeness and stupidity of it all.

But one day a far more sensational piece reached us from America. It was topped by huge headlines and contained the purple story of the "Empress of Galapagos." This potentate was described in such a way that it could be none other than our Baroness. This was confirmed a few lines farther down, where she was mentioned with full name and title. It told of a cruising party; among them was a honeymoon couple wandering down around the romantic islands. A boat brought them to land, where they were greeted much in the manner in which Stampa had been received,


4
He shoots himself dead.

only more so. The newspaper's pen-and-ink artist had given his fancy free rein in an affecting picture of the bride upon her knees, pleading for mercy to the Empress of the islands, who stood with folded arms, adamant. According to this yarn, the Baroness kept the whole party imprisoned for some days, then set them adrift in rowing-boats, presumably to perish on highseas. The whole was flavored with the buccaneering touch, readers being given to understand that the ship in which these people had come had been taken by the Empress as a prize.

It was impossible for us to take this nonsense seriously, but still one never knew—the Baroness was capable of anything. The only thing certain was that we had seen nothing of these arrivals, which was odd considering that the Floreana shore was highly dangerous and inaccessible except at Post Office Bay and Black Beach, and that not even the smallest boat could land at either of those points unseen by either Wittmers or ourselves. We seldom went down to the Bay, but Wittmer often did, and he would have noticed a party of prisoners. They could not have been kept anywhere but at the Casa, and there they certainly had never been. Nor was there any trace of a ship recently acquired by the Baroness. Since Valdivieso had stolen Wittmer's skiff and taken it to Chatham, the island had possessed no boat at all. We therefore dismissed this foolish story from our minds.

We were not reminded of it again until Captain Hancock recalled it to us. He had come back to the island, and this time, he told us, he meant to make a film of the Baroness, whose dramatic talent he esteemed at its true worth. It was to be a pirate film, he said.

Thereupon, putting a simple two and two together, I realized that the Baroness, anticipating some such chance as this, had invented the whole story and got it into the American press. Captain Hancock told us that he had asked her point-blank whether it was true in the form in which he himself had read it—in the same newspaper we had seen. The Baroness, with every appearance of contrition, admitted that it was. She had been most humble about it, he said, and heaped reproaches upon herself for the great ardor of her temperament which, when dramatic situations offered, invariably ran away with her, leaving her afterwards the prey of

deep remorse. She said she knew that it was a terrible thing to have treated those two young people so cruelly, but she had always been subject to strange satanic moods which she had no power to subdue.

The film was made.

Captain Hancock then went on another of his scientific cruises, returning some three weeks later to Black Beach. There was a tourist ship, the *Stella Polaris*, anchored in Post Office Bay, Floreana having now become one of the stops on round-the-world trips. Captain Hancock told us that we had been billed on the program as one of the "sights," and that many people on board to whom he had talked had expressed great interest in our idea, and said that they would like to meet us. He asked us, as a special favor to himself, not to refuse to put in an appearance, and so of course we did not.

Accordingly, in the afternoon we went down and found a large crowd gathered in the ship's saloon. They made much of Frederick and me, and plied us with a thousand questions. They were extremely friendly, and some of them we found so agreeable that we were sorry that they would be sailing away too soon for us to ask them up to Friedo.

During a lull in the animated talk, I happened to glance across to a far corner of the large saloon, and there I saw the Baroness. She was quite alone. She wore a pair of green silk knee-pants, and an embroidered peasant blouse. It was a most peculiar costume, certainly designed to attract attention. But if it did so, one could only regret it, for those garments did not suit her. I had sometimes been sorry for the Baroness before, but never as much so as at this moment in that trivial, childish masquerade, which made a mockery of the genuine talent for dress that she possessed, and of her ability to make a good appearance.

Suddenly one of the women got up and went over to her and a moment later I heard her saying loudly ". . . miss the theater? Oh no! I consider this island life my greatest rôle. It's like a wonderful revue. . . ." She said this with the theatrical intonation I knew so well, and with an expression of spurious vividness, which badly matched her dismal air of a moment before. The conversa-

tion was a short one and soon she was alone again. I had an impulse to join her, but something held me back. I fear that some of my answers to the strangers' questions sounded vague enough, but my thoughts were riveted to the Baroness, solitary in her corner, looking so old and grotesque in that inexplicable costume.

At last she rose and crossed to the conductor of the orchestra. "Herr Kapellmeister," she began—though why she should have chosen the German mode of address I did not understand— "Oh, Herr Kapellmeister, do play a waltz from my dear Vienna!" She emphasized her plea with her brightest smile and a look which had not always been so disregarded, for the leader of the orchestra merely glanced round at her with an expression of annoyance, and ignored her.

I do not think that anybody but myself observed this little episode, but I saw the Baroness cast a strange swift look around the big saloon as if to see whether the rebuff had been a public one. Her gay self-assurance dropped away from her. She seemed to hesitate a moment, then walked slowly back to the corner where she had come from.

Amid the pleasant talk and laughter from which some unspoken veto banished her, I looked across the room again. I would go and talk to her; I could not see her there alone like that. But she was gone.

How often I regretted afterwards that I postponed that trifling act of courtesy until it was too late! For that was the last time I ever saw the Baroness.

We returned with Captain Hancock to the *Velero*, and to our astonishment found Philippson on board. He gave out that he had come to borrow some medicine, but this, I knew, was a mere pretext. It was his task to smuggle his way, invited or uninvited, on to all the yachts that came, and scrape or renew acquaintance with their owners. In nothing did this young man show the extent of his devotion to the Baroness more than in the outward fortitude with which he suffered the humiliation she caused him at the hands of others.

Philippson did not stay long. As he left, I watched his vigorous and handsome figure going down the deck. He was so young, and

with such strength and good looks it seemed impossible that he might not have lived a more worth-while life in the world, had only his destroying passion not come between him and a young man's normal, sane career.

Remembering how the Baroness, his lover, had looked that afternoon, a woman at the very end of her rope, for whom there was no way back and none forward, Philippson seemed to me even more tragic at that moment than on the day when Frederick had seen him on the Friedo path bowed down with trouble. In the falling darkness the boat that rowed him back to shore was soon lost to sight. Nor was I ever to see Philippson again.

Post Office Bay presented an unusual sight that day, very different from the times of yore, when we might almost have perished had not Commander McDonald's yacht appeared—there were three ships anchored there at the same time. The third of these had brought a Danish expedition to the islands and on the next day this party visited us at Friedo.

Our old acquaintance, Nuggerud, was with them, having run over to Floreana in the hope of gathering a few orders for supplies. While our new visitors were walking around the garden, and making friends with little Fleck, Nuggerud told us of a scene which had taken place at the Bay the night before. It must have been very late, he said, when all at once a huge bonfire was lighted near the Casa close to the water's edge. From the ship's deck one could clearly discern two figures performing a weird dance in the light of the flames. It was the Baroness and Philippson, reeling and staggering crazily, shouting at the top of their lungs and singing in blatant voices. Strangers might have thought that this orgy was being staged with a watchful eye upon the audience in the yachts, but Nuggerud knew better. He said that they were quite oblivious to their surroundings, and obviously extremely drunk.

While Nuggerud was telling us this story, which he thought most humorous, some of the others had come up and joined in his laughter, adding a touch here and there to his description, for they had all enjoyed the scene. But I was not amused. Drinking was not the Baroness's habit—this we knew from Wittmer, who would have been the first to inform us if the wild doings at the

Hacienda ever included drunkenness. Something now told me that things up there must be going very wrong for the Baroness to drown her disappointments in alcohol.

I could not laugh about her with the others. She seemed to stand before me, a phantom of her outer and inner self—the face with the strained green eyes, often over-full of malice, in which no light shone; the studied gestures, the false cordiality, the bluff, the dramatizing; all the empty charm which lured even me at first, and all the ruthlessness and cruelty of arsenic for Lorenz and horse-whip for her lover, Philippson. And I remembered Arends, who had only just escaped the island with his life. Yet behind all this there must have been some semblance of a real person somewhere, sometime, but very long ago perhaps. Again I felt a pity for her, such as had never moved me in all the time before.

I did not know then that the Baroness's life was almost done. But she had shown me a great truth—that the human being may shed all his substance and become the mere outward semblance of a man, yet so long as he remains within the shelter of the social world, no one will know that he is nothing but a simulacrum of himself. In the wilderness, this falsehood cannot stand.

Neither Frederick, nor I, nor any of the visitors had seen Lorenz.

Chapter XXIII: DEATH IN DAYLIGHT

THE LAST YEAR ON FLOREANA—1934. THE FIRST TWO months were over. Friends had come and gone. We were alone again, yet not alone. The atmosphere of uncanniness, of gathering evil, was closing in again upon the island. I felt it enveloping us anew, as I had felt it years ago, before the security of Friedo had become our safe haven against the demon gods of Floreana. In the meantime they had gathered power, or else it was their will to make an end of all intrusion, for now they came with a weapon human wits and strength are powerless against.

The drought began towards the end of February. Heat such as we had never known on the island now scorched and blasted every growing thing. The sun hung in a sky of brass, and at night the burning earth gave forth a heat as though a furnace blazed beneath its rocky surface. The strong plants withered up, leaves blackened on the trees. The spring, that was the source of life to Friedo, had ceased to flow, and had become a thin trickle of water, wearily crawling out of its dry bed.

A strange wind rose. It drove with violence across the island like a vast fan of invisible fire; everything perished under its sweeping breath. Banana trees went down like straws before it, and it did not cease for several days and nights. It was succeeded by a heat more intolerable than before. We measured 120 degrees in the shade.

The rains were months overdue, but though we scanned the skies for some sign of a cloud, none came.

The silent days were followed now by silent nights. The thirsting beasts knew that the water had dried up; they seemed to join the earth and sky in one great silence of foreboding. The island was strewn with the carcasses of those the drought had killed; it exhaled the odors of decay and death. The fence that we had built round Friedo could not keep out this, and with it came the knowledge, at least to me, that powers were abroad on Floreana which we would pit our puny human strength against in vain.

Wittmer still came to Friedo every week to see us. He was having a hard time, with his spring reduced to almost nothing and

his ground less good than ours. But at the Hacienda things were much worse still, he told us. The Baroness's animals were starving, the garden had become a waste of dry leaves and stalks. It had ceased to produce foodstuffs for the household of three, and Wittmer could not tell how they subsisted, unless, as he surmised, they still had a fair store of bought supplies. But if this drought went on and no ships came, he said, they would be calling on us all to help them very soon.

I anticipated some such visit daily, and wondered what form the roundabout ways of the Baroness would invent for it. I expected Philippson to come again with some excuse, perhaps to ask Frederick for professional advice, for a prolonged drought is hard upon the health of Europeans.

It was not Philippson who came, but Lorenz. Not the cautious, frightened, later Lorenz, but the fierce, resentful, and not quite hopeless youth who had come to us in the early days to talk himself out. We had disliked him violently in the other phase, but now our old sympathy for him returned. He had grown terribly thin and gaunt, and looked so starved and ghastly that I wondered whether he had come to us to die. But some strange strength, some remnant of will-power stronger than exhaustion and proof against the final hopelessness, still held him up. It was extraordinary.

He told us what was happening at the Hacienda. We heard again of fearful quarrels, much more bitter than in the past. He told us how his only remaining hope and wish in life was to get off the island.

He had demanded money of the Baroness—just enough to get away—and it had then come out that her money was almost gone. A large proportion of it had been swallowed up by the very costly aftermath of the accident to Arends. Far from ending fatally, the accident had proved by no means a financial disadvantage to the victim.

When Lorenz realized that she would not give him any of the small fund she had left, he said he would throw himself upon the kindness of some caller at the island and get away to Guayaquil free, and demanded that she hand him out his other belongings. This too she refused. She locked up all his things, and kept such

watch that it was impossible for him to get at them. He understood why she was afraid to let him go away alone. She feared he would spread a tale about her sadly at variance with the legends she had spread about herself.

By this time he was desperate; he meant to go if anyone would take him—if necessary, without clothes, without money, without anything. He could not bear the Hacienda any longer. He lived in terror lest a passing boat might call and go away without him, and so his plan was to go down to the Casa and wait. But at the Casa there was neither food nor water. He begged and besought her to let him have enough to keep him alive just for a day or two; he pleaded with her as a man might plead for his last hope of salvation, even with tears.

She answered: "Get out of my sight, you spawn—you dog—you low-down bastard! Go down to your damned Bay and rot there for all I care."

Philippson stood by and laughed at him.

Then Lorenz saw red. He forgot that they were two against one, that the woman had a horsewhip in her hand, that Philippson was powerful and still well-nourished, more than a match for two of him in his condition. He forgot everything but that his clothes and the few poor things that he possessed were locked up in a cupboard in that room. He seized a chair and swung it round his head, to dash it against the frail cupboard door and break it in. He heard the crack and splintering of wood, he saw a mocking laugh upon the woman's face; something hit him a sickening blow upon the head, and then he knew no more.

When he came back to consciousness he found himself lying on the path outside the Hacienda. Gradually he became aware that he was racked with pain. Welts on his limbs showed that he had been brutally flogged while he was still unconscious.

After a long while he managed to stagger to his feet but could hardly walk a step. He had neither eaten nor drunk since early morning, and the sun beating down upon his head had given him a kind of sunstroke, so that nausea overcame him at every step. His clouded brain contained but one idea, which was to get to Friedo, though it was rapidly growing dark. He thought that he must be

near death, but dreaded to perish by the wayside like the poor beasts that strewed the island in the drought. He knew that we would not refuse him shelter and that Frederick would find some means of alleviating his great pain.

Night overtook him on the way, and he must have fallen down again in a long fit of unconsciousness. For two days after this he roamed about the island, with such a rage of humiliation and resentment gathering in him that he was conscious of neither thirst nor hunger, nor lack of sleep.

He had at last found his way to Friedo, but he did not ask us to take him in. Perhaps he hesitated to involve us with the Baroness; at any rate, he seemed to take it for granted that he could stay at Wittmer's. He asked us to write out a notice for him to post on the barrel at Post Office Bay, to the effect that a German settler wished at all costs to leave the island, and begged anyone willing to take him off to notify him at Wittmer's. We gladly complied with this request, though even as we did so we believed that in spite of all he had been through he would still not have the courage nor the strength of will to resist the Baroness if she should again make a serious attempt to turn him from his purpose.

And yet something had changed in Lorenz. It was like a strength but it was not strength. It was a fierce and burning desperation which, in a man less physically broken, might have blazed out in madness. I feared for him. I did not dream that it could be the others I should fear for.

The heat continued. The blighting wind swept over Floreana. The drought lay on the island like a curse that never would be lifted. Or did these gods require some human sacrifice?

It was noon of the 19th of March. Frederick and I had both tried to do our morning's studying in spite of the intense heat, but it had proved impossible. We gave up and lay down to rest awhile. In all such climates, the midday hour is the hour of silence, and in the thirsting, death-filled days of the great drought on Floreana, the stillness was hardly to be borne. It weighed upon the soul like the dumb anguish of all that suffering earth and the poor beasts that went upon it. Not a leaf stirred. The wind had suddenly dropped entirely.

All at once a long-drawn shriek gashed the silence. It was an outcry of such panic terror that it was hardly human, and yet it was a woman's voice. It froze the marrow in our bones, and paralyzed us for a moment. It sounded neither near nor far. It seemed like no earthly sound at all, and almost before it had been uttered the silence closed about it once again, as water closes over a drowned corpse, showing no trace where it went down.

We got up. Frederick went to the gate, I following him. If some one had been hurt, Friedo was the first place at which help would be sought, and we expected every moment to hear footsteps rushing down the path towards us. We waited endlessly, but no one came. We went back to the house quite shattered. Frederick was as white as a ghost, and so, he said, was I. We hardly dared to speak of what we had heard. It was almost as though each tried to make the other believe he had but imagined the fearful scream.

I said, "The drought is playing havoc with our nerves."

And Frederick answered, "There may be something in the atmosphere at seasons like this that could exaggerate or distort sound."

But we both knew that we were only talking for the calm and comfort of hearing each other's natural voice.

The next day was the day when Wittmer usually called, but he did not come. We could not forget the cry of terror, and meant to ask him whether he had heard it. The day following, not he, but Lorenz, came.

This was a different Lorenz from the time before. His fearful load of hatred and despair seemed to have lifted. He still looked very ill but was in good spirits. The bright, engaging smile which had been his chief feature when we met him first had not returned, still he had regained something of his former youthfulness. He was unusually voluble and had so much to say that we both forgot to ask him whether he had heard the scream the day before.

We said that we were glad to see him looking so much better, and presumed that a kind of truce had been concluded once more between this rebel of the Hacienda and the others.

"Have you made it up with the Baroness?" I asked.

"Not this time," he answered.

"Oh, then you're staying at the Wittmers'?"

"Yes, I am."

"Doesn't she mind?" was my next question, for I knew the Baroness well enough to know that she would lose no time in going to the Wittmers' and demanding Lorenz back.

"Mind!" said Lorenz. "I've told her once and for all where she gets off!"

"Will she remember it?" said I.

"I think she will," Lorenz answered.

This astonished us very much. He must have seen the almost incredulous question in our eyes, for suddenly he went red and began to talk very fast about all kinds of things—but incoherently, as though, realizing that he had been caught saying something he should not have said, he was trying to cover it up with irrelevant chatter, and cause us to forget what we had heard.

We knew that Lorenz was untruthful; that is to say, he told the truth, but always only up to a certain point, when he would begin to prevaricate and go back on the things he said before.

Suddenly we became aware that he was relating a story, and now I paid close attention. He had been staying at the Wittmers' for three days, he said, when the Baroness came after him. (My supposition had been right, then.) She did not come into the garden, but stood outside the gate and called to him. He was doing a little job for Wittmer some distance off, at which Frau Wittmer was helping him. Frau Wittmer then went over, as he ignored the call, and asked the Baroness what she wanted.

"Why won't you come in?" she asked. "You needn't shout at him from here."

But for some reason, the Baroness did not accept the invitation. Frau Wittmer then went back to Lorenz and said that he had better not have any dealings with her outside, for one never knew whether he also might not be shot.

While he was hesitating, the Baroness changed her mind and came into the garden. She seemed peaceable, and asked Lorenz where a certain wrench was that she needed. She and Philippson had looked for it everywhere, but couldn't find it. Lorenz told her where it was.

"I wish you'd come and help me bake some bread," the Baroness then said. "You know I never can do that alone—and Robert's worse than useless as a baker!"

She spoke so winningly, he said, just as though nothing had happened. But he was not to be caught like this again, so he assured us.

He remained quite hard and said, "If you give me back my things I'll help you. But don't expect me ever to stay with you again. I've had enough. I won't stand for that swine Philippson any more."

With that, he said, he turned his back upon her. But she persisted, and brought up every unlikely reason why he should return to the Hacienda. The talk went on for hours; then she went away.

"Well," I said, "at any rate you've shown her at last that you can take a stand against her!"

"Oh," said Lorenz, "but she'll be back again—I know her. She will never leave me in peace. She'll always find a new excuse to come around again."

I looked at him. How weak his face was, after all. I did not believe that in a tussle of those two wills, his and the Baroness's, he would have the firmness to resist, no matter what might be at stake for him. But before I could answer, he had suddenly jumped to another theme.

"Oh, by the way," he said, "I've just acquired two Flecks."

"Really," I said. "Baby ones?"

"Yes," he replied. "I caught them."

Now this was surprising, for nothing is so hard to catch as wild donkeys, and why Lorenz should suddenly have gone out chasing them I could not conceive. He had never done such a thing before, and there was certainly even less reason to do so now than there might have been in the transport days when, through ill-treatment, the Hacienda donkeys soon broke down.

It seemed very odd, but I was pleased, for I should have liked to have a foster-mother for my Fleck, who was a little difficult to bring up on the bottle.

But Lorenz had leaped from his chair suddenly in burning haste to go. I asked him about the mother donkey, but he seemed not even to have heard me. At the edge of the veranda he turned

round and said hastily, "Herr Wittmer will be along on Sunday." And he was gone.

We let him go. This visit had done nothing to illuminate the strangeness of everything around us.

March the 25th is my birthday and I baked a cake to celebrate it. Wittmer came down, and he too—or did I merely imagine this? —seemed unlike his usual self. He produced a letter from his pocket.

"This is for you," he said, and put it on the table. It was not addressed to us but to a certain "Alec." It described life at the Hacienda very briefly, but attached a written copy of an article by one "Franke" concerning a visit to the Baroness's paradise.

The letter contained a reference to a book which some American yachtsman, after visiting the Hacienda, had written and published about the Floreana settlers. Frederick and I—whom the man had never laid eyes upon—came off extremely badly in the book, as well as in the documents. They were of no special interest except in one respect: namely, that we now had proof of how the Baroness had been faking reports about the Hacienda and the island, sending them out to various newspapers of the world, signed by the name "Franke." It amused me to learn that the glory of the Hacienda was "a central avenue of banana trees over a mile long." I had never yet felt envy of the Baroness, but I should certainly have been quite green with jealousy if anybody on the island had achieved an avenue of even fifty banana trees that the first serious gust of wind did not blow over.

Both Frederick and I ignored the cheap and foolish insults which the letter and the "article" contained. The letter had been signed "Antoinette, Robert, Lorenz," so that even Lorenz apparently had been ready to malign us at the Baroness's bidding. But we considered such things negligible.

"The only thing I'd like to know," said Frederick to Wittmer, "is how you come to have these compositions in your possession."

"Lorenz brought them," Wittmer answered. "He got them off the table at the Hacienda."

"I see," I put in. "So he did go back, after all!"

Just as Lorenz had done, now Wittmer went off at a tangent, leaving my implied questions conspicuously unanswered.

"It is an outrage," he began. "The woman is a danger to us all. We let her get away with everything. I know you're hard to move in such matters, but what I want is for us all to get together now, and do something to put an end to all this rottenness. Now that you've got proof of the sort of story she is spreading against you, perhaps you will be more ready to join me in some action against her. It's no use appealing to Ecuador. We've tried that often enough and it leads to nothing. We've got to take our protection into our own hands now."

Wittmer began to talk himself into a raving fury against the Baroness. We had never seen him in this state before. When he had done, he turned to Frederick and said, "We are our own law here on Floreana!"

But Frederick answered coldly, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. Everyone is responsible for his own actions. That is enough."

Frederick had spoken, but the gods of Floreana had spoken before him. For justice had already been done to the Baroness; she had been tried by the island and found wanting. Philippson had also fallen, the victim of his own destructive passion, as the Baroness had been the victim of passions she inflamed in others—love that turned to hatred, jealousy ending in revenge, frenzy of the captive abused too long. Man in the grip of passions is the gods' tool and Lorenz stood all ready to their hand.

Chapter XXIV: CLUES

THE BARONESS HAD BEEN MURDERED. PHILIPPSON HAD BEEN murdered.

Four other people on the island knew it, as it was known to every ghost and spirit that went about upon that haunted ground. Only Frederick and I did not know it yet, though often in the watches of the days and nights a shudder still went through us at the recollection of the scream that we had heard. It seemed as though the very air had changed, and all the natural and familiar things had grown mysterious and incomprehensible. Why had Lorenz been confused? Why had he fled from us that day at Friedo? What was the explanation of Wittmer's sudden storm of rage against the Baroness, since neither he nor his wife had been so much as mentioned in the article and letter he had brought?

Frau Wittmer, as I have said, had never been to see us. Now suddenly one day she came, not with her husband but with Lorenz. I made them welcome, but all the while I was sure that something evil lay behind this visit. This strange conviction, far from being refuted, was intensified when Frau Wittmer set out gifts upon the table—belated birthday presents, she called them with a laugh: a cake and half a dozen handkerchiefs delicately embroidered. She said her sister had sent them to her, but that she would like me to have them. At this visit, precisely as at her husband's and Lorenz's before, the to-and-fro conversation suddenly stopped, and gave way to the telling of what seemed like a set story. This time Frau Wittmer was the narrator and her story was more astonishing than those of the other two had been.

It must have been on Monday morning, she began, when a great deal of animated talk from the direction of the Hacienda indicated that a number of guests had called upon the Baroness. The following morning Harry Wittmer and Lorenz went out to gather firewood, and while they were away the Baroness came once more to ask for Lorenz, not entering the garden, but standing, as before, outside the gate. Her husband, Frau Wittmer went on, sent her out to see the woman, not wishing to talk to her himself. The Baroness was in high excitement, we were told. She told Frau

Wittmer that the strangest thing had happened—a party of old friends, making a tour of the world in a private yacht, had paid her a surprise visit in order to get her and Philippson to join them on a South Sea cruise.

Frau Wittmer gave a circumstantial account of all the Baroness had had to say upon the subject of one's business chances in the South Seas, how the hotel scheme would work out better there and the plans which she had hoped to put into effect on Floreana prove more feasible in those more favored regions. We heard how the Baroness suffered in the drought, which she found terrible, and in conclusion Frau Wittmer told how she said:

"We're glad we're going. It must have been troublesome to you to have us always running to your spring for water, when there is so little of it for yourselves." (But the spring had been declared the common property of the Wittmers and the household at the Hacienda.)

She went on, Frau Wittmer said, to leave a message of farewell for Lorenz, and would Frau Wittmer beg him in her name to take good care of all the animals? (This point in the story caught my attention particularly, for I well knew the treatment animals received at these people's hands.)

The message for Lorenz ended, it seemed, with a general verbal bequest to him, not only of the Hacienda but of everything it contained; he was to consider it all as his own, and was free to dispose of it as he saw fit.

And the Baroness's last words which, said Frau Wittmer, were spoken with much intensity, were a petition to the absent Lorenz to forgive her for what share she might have had in causing him the suffering he had endured, and to remember her as kindly as he could.

"It's rather strange she didn't wait for him to come back," I put in at this point. "After all, one does prefer to say such things direct."

But Frau Wittmer had another interpretation of this most unlikely behavior on the part of the Baroness, who would never in life have let slip so unique a chance to play a touching scene! Lorenz and her stepson, she said, returned about an hour after-

wards; by that time the Baroness must almost have arrived at Post Office Bay, whither Philippson had preceded her, together with her friends. Frau Wittmer declared that it was she herself who brought all her influence to bear on Lorenz not to follow the Baroness down to the Bay to say good-by, for she feared that this might be another ruse of Philippson's to harm him. So Lorenz did not go. In fact Frau Wittmer, who, we were told, pitied him terribly on account of the ill-treatment he had received, kept him closely within her own garden until the Baroness and Philippson should have got safely off the island.

"It must have been quite a large party," I said.

"Oh, quite a crowd," Frau Wittmer answered.

"About what time would it be when she went down to the Bay?" asked Frederick.

"It must have been about twelve," answered Frau Wittmer, "because I remember saying it was time for me to go and give Rolf his dinner."

Frederick seemed satisfied with this reply; I had been struck by the close attention with which he had followed Frau Wittmer's story, for usually such things interested him but little.

Lorenz, Frau Wittmer said, wisely let himself be prevailed upon, and did not even go as far down the path as to see the ship go out which was taking the Baroness, his former mistress, and Philippson, his tormenter, away from him forever. That they were gone, there could be no doubt whatever, so Frau Wittmer said, for utter silence reigned in the direction of the Hacienda.

Towards the end of the day, the story continued, Lorenz went over to take possession of his legacy. He found the place in indescribable confusion, everything inside and outside bearing witness to the haste of the departure. All the suitcases had disappeared, including Lorenz's, for this was one of the first things he looked for, having, as Frau Wittmer said, but one desire—to leave the island now himself as soon as possible.

The Baroness was reported to have ridden down to Post Office Bay upon the only donkey she had left, and it did not come back. Lorenz found two baby donkeys in the stall, one belonging to the Hacienda's only surviving she-ass, the other an orphan of a second

she-ass that had died shortly before. Feeling sorry for them, he brought them back to the Wittmers'.

"I thought he hadn't caught them," I said to myself, recalling Lorenz's own version of this part of the story. But I did not voice my thought aloud.

Now Lorenz took up the thread of Frau Wittmer's narrative. He burst into a savage tirade against the vanished Baroness, declaring that she had ruined him body and soul, and calling her by every dreadful name that he could think of.

"Good riddance of foul rubbish," he said savagely, his flushed face distorted with hatred. "I hope they both get shipwrecked and eaten up by sharks!" His voice was shrill with passion, and I looked at him sharply, unable to account for the sudden intensity of his emotion.

To my still greater astonishment, his excitement subsided as suddenly as it had risen, and it was in a perfectly cool and matter-of-fact voice that he asked us if we wouldn't buy some of the Baroness's things from him. They had left no money for him, he said, and he was burning to get off the island, which he could not do in a destitute condition.

I was sincerely glad that Lorenz was now free to go and only too ready to help him, so I immediately answered that of course we should be glad to buy what we could.

This seemed to be the sign for the visit to end, for no sooner had I spoken than Frau Wittmer and Lorenz got up to go. They said they would send a donkey on the following Sunday, the 1st of April, to take me up to the caves, and we arranged that we should then all go to the Hacienda, in order that Frederick and I might choose things to buy.

We took them to the gate, and saw them out. All the way up the long garden path to the house Frederick was silent.

"What are you thinking about?" I asked him.

"You played your part extremely well, Dore," he said. "I didn't think you had it in you."

"My part?" I repeated. "What part?"

Frederick was looking very grave. "My dear child," he said, "is it possible that you believed all that? The whole story was nothing

but lies from beginning to end. I haven't yet made out exactly what the purpose of it was, but one thing is very clear . . ."

A chill of horror rippled down my spine. I felt my face go white. My eyes were fixed on Frederick's face. I hardly dared to speak, and yet I felt that I must know the truth.

"Tell me what you mean," I whispered. "Hasn't the Baroness really gone?"

Frederick's strong and steadying hand took mine, and held it very close.

"Yes, she has gone," he said, "but no friends came for her and there was no yacht. The Baroness has been murdered, Dore, and so has Philippson."

"Oh, Frederick!" I said. "Whatever shall we do?"

"We can do nothing," Frederick answered calmly. "But I shall write down everything we have heard and whatever else we may observe. It will be safer so!"

I sat appalled. One by one the recollections of the past few days defiled before my mind—two of them stood out in unspeakable hideousness: the first, that fearful scream—we knew now what it had been—the second, Lorenz's good humor on the day when he had come to see us, when we had expected Wittmer. I thought of that expression of relief that I had noticed in his face and in his manner. I remember that he had even laughed.

After a while Frederick got up and went back to his work. I sat on for a while where he had left me, but suddenly could bear the place no longer. I felt that Friedo had been desecrated and could never be the same again. I remembered the luncheon long ago when I thought a murderess was sitting at our table, but all the time the fate she seemed to be preparing for another was being spun for her. I got up and left the house. I felt that I must go down to the clearing where I could see the ocean and regain my calm in contemplation of its vast serenity. A great pity for the unfortunate Baroness rushed over me. While she lived I would have given anything to see her leave the island, but now that she was dead, and dead in so horrible a way, I would have given just as much to see her back again. True, she had brought her tragedy upon herself and it was nothing but the evil she herself had caused

that had been visited upon her and her poor companion. And yet the manner of retribution that had overtaken her at the hands of some one who had loved her once filled me with gloom and horrified dismay.

I returned to the house and the first thing my eyes fell upon was the birthday gift of the embroidered handkerchiefs. Somehow I knew that these had not come from Frau Wittmer's sister—they were the Baroness's. I stood and looked at them, so delicate and feminine with their fine embroidery lying shimmering on the table in the falling dusk. And suddenly I seemed to see them stained with blood. I picked them up and took them into the garden far from the house and made a hole and buried them. It was horrible to me to think that we had promised Lorenz to buy some of "his" things. I would sooner have lent him money had I thought of it. Now it was too late. It would not do to refuse.

As this thought entered my mind, it brought with it the realization that a new fear had seized upon me. I knew that henceforth I should be possessed by the dread that Frederick and I would be the next victims of the murderer that stalked the island. We had been drawn into the web of all these people's lives and we could hope for no escape.

We must now act a part, the part that had been written for us by the invisible authors of the tragedy which was at last to free the island of intruders. We did not know what end they had designed for us, but it was plain to me that for the moment our safety, indeed our very lives, depended on our keeping our suspicions to ourselves. It was with dread that I looked forward to the following Sunday and the visit which must be endured.

Lorenz and the Wittmer boy came punctually with a donkey, which I rode back to the caves. I was grateful to Frederick for keeping close beside me, and tried to engage young Harry Wittmer in talk in order not to hear the terrible abuse of the Baroness with which Lorenz beguiled the whole long way. But it was impossible not to hear a great deal of what he said, and much of it enlightened one still further as to the character of that strange woman.

We learned that she had been in the habit of addressing letters to herself to Panama, with the object of having them brought to

Floreana by the passing pleasure yachts. She had conceived of her life as a series of dramatic rôles, and no one knew, herself perhaps least of all, at which point her real life ceased to exist and merged entirely with theater.

Once she sent an order to a big American cigarette factory for twenty thousand cigarettes, accompanying her letter with a photograph bearing the double autographs of "The Empress of Galapagos and Robert Philippson, her Minister." She was insatiable for publicity, no matter what it cost. And in the end, it cost her everything.

We passed the Hacienda. It was dazzling noon and very hot, but an icy shudder shook me as I rode by. The fence and gateposts were gay with bright paint. The whole place looked inviting, cheerful and well kept, a smiling mask that hid confusion, evil memories and crime. I trembled at the thought that we should come back later with the Wittmers, and have to enter the house; it needed all my self-control not to turn the donkey's head and rush back to Friedo.

This was the first time we had seen the Wittmers' new house. It was built solidly of sandstone and contained several rooms. It looked very handsome and did credit to the builder's talent as architect as well as to his immense and tireless energy. For to have erected a place like that with his own hands was a considerable achievement for a man.

Frau Wittmer had done her share in the interior arrangements, which were excellent.

Frederick and I performed our parts at least adequately, for neither our hosts nor Lorenz suspected that we knew or guessed anything different from what we had been told. This we could tell by their ease of manner towards us. I wondered why the Wittmers should so completely have made Lorenz's cause their own. It was no trifle to defend a murderer, especially the murderer of a woman, and there was something incomprehensible to me in the perfect casualness of these two people's attitude towards this man of violence, whom they had taken into their house. For what we guessed, they must have known; and as I watched them both, my mind was full of questions.

I tried to penetrate their casualness, to find out whether it was but a cloak for fear like mine. Their fear might conceivably have been greater than mine because of the child, who would be exposed to certain death if anything should happen to them. Or could it be that friendship and sympathy had so far triumphed over judgment that crime had ceased to be a barrier? I could find it in my heart to envy and admire this, if it were so. And what of Wittmer's son? Was he, a young boy, also in the secret?

The lunch was very good, and skillfully cooked. The table was covered with a beautiful pink damask cloth, and when the plates were cleared away a very handsome tea set took their place. I had seen the tea set and tablecloth before, but they had been at the Baroness's then. Still I said nothing, and no one saw that I had noticed.

Frederick said that he had drawn up a document containing everything that Lorenz and Frau Wittmer had told concerning the departure of the Baroness. He had brought it with him and he read it aloud. It was an absolutely faithful record of their story and they corroborated it approvingly, but asked him why he had gone to the trouble of writing it all down.

"It's better not to trust to memory," said Frederick, "and it is always good to make a note of such unusual happenings."

"I don't think it was necessary," Wittmer said. "Evidence is out of question in a case like this."

"Still somebody might come asking questions about her or Philippson, and their whereabouts," Frederick explained earnestly. The others laughed.

"So long as she's gone, why worry how she went?" "Am I my brother's keeper?" "They say bad pennies do turn up again, but we can wait and see." These were rejoinders, all quite lightly spoken.

I exercised what subterfuge I could, to delay as long as possible the evil moment when the signal would be given to go to the nearby Hacienda. To keep the talk on other things, I asked about the little donkeys and said that I should like to see them. I told about the difficulties I had had in bringing up Fleck by hand after

he had lost his mother, but the Wittmers said that their orphans were doing very well.

"We've had them five weeks," Wittmer said, "and they thrive on everything we give them."

Just in the nick of time I kept myself from showing my surprise. So Lorenz had told still another lie—my mind went back, and farther back. There was the scream, and two days later Lorenz's visit. Yes, he must have gone straight there—afterwards. And the next day the Wittmers had received the donkeys. It was also untrue that the Wittmers had had them as long as he said.

My thoughts were drawn away from this theme by hearing Wittmer speak my Burro's name. At last I was to learn what had become of him. It now came out that the Baroness had hated him ever since the day when he had so annoyed her down at Friedo, and her resentment had been fed by hearing his praises sung by all the visitors to Floreana.

When it was time for me to be made to feel the lash, she thought that she could do this no more effectively than through the animal I was fond of. And so she had contrived one night to lure him into the Wittmers' garden, knowing that there marauders would be shot with very little ado, for Wittmer was not sentimental where despoilers of his plantation were concerned.

When Wittmer saw which donkey it was that he had so summarily shot, he was filled with distress, and did not dare to tell me. He confessed it now with honest pain, and what could I do but say that I forgave him? Lorenz profited again by this occasion to tell how the Baroness had gloated at the successful issue of this cruel plan of hers. She had especially hated me, he said.

The Hacienda was hardly more than a stone's throw away from the Wittmers' house but as we set out for the inescapable visit, I leaning gratefully on Frederick's arm, I could have wished that some magic would prolong the road such endless miles that we would never reach that eerie destination. I felt, rather than saw, that it was costing even Frederick an effort to maintain his calm composure. I felt like an intruder on the dead. When we passed through the gate, it seemed to me that the Baroness's ghost and Philippson's accompanied our every step.

The day, until that moment, had been absolutely still, without the faintest breeze. Now all at once a sudden scorching wind swept up, and rustled horribly through the parched and straw-like leaves of the bananas. A harsh, dry whispering seemed to go all through the garden, as though a crowd of unseen, spectral watchers mocked and discussed us. Such terror gripped me that, if Frederick had not held me up, I must have fallen. The pressure of his arm in mine was a reassurance and a warning, and I summoned all my strength for the ordeal to come.

It was the house I dreaded most to enter.

Lorenz led the way, closely followed by the Wittmers. They all went in with a casualness I could not understand. There was something in it hideously jaunty. Within the doorway I hung back for a second to take a first look round, in order to defend myself from any sudden revelation. It was a purely instinctive impulse, but instinct, at such times, always saves one.

It was well that I did so or I should have screamed at the sight of the first thing my eyes encountered. It was the Baroness's hat upon the table. Against the wall were all her shoes in a neat row, as I had seen them once before. In a far corner stood her luggage. The trunks and suitcases were piled up as they had always been.

We had been told that the sudden departure had left the house in a state of wild confusion; we found it perfectly tidy. True, there had been time enough to clear up any disorder, but there were other signs which showed that no cleaning up had been done. For dust lay thick on everything, more than a fortnight's dust. In an ash-tray lay the recognizable remains of the long-stemmed Russian cigarettes the Baroness always smoked. We had been told that they had taken most of their belongings, yet family photographs, one of Philippson's mother, were still where they had always been. And there was the hat upon the table. . . .

The Baroness had often spoken of one small possession which she regarded almost as a talisman. She had had it for years, she told us, and it went with her everywhere. We had Lorenz's word for it long ago that this was true. It was a copy of *Dorian Grey*. She said that it was not only the work itself but that particular volume to which, for sentimental reasons, she was inseparably attached. She

told me she never went on a trip without it. The book was still there.

Meanwhile Lorenz, with the most cold-blooded matter-of-factness, was bringing various objects forward, and spreading them about the room for us to choose from. This was almost more than I could stand. I had, by this time, only one idea left, and that was to get away from the Hacienda as quickly as possible. Without looking at the things, I pointed out one or two at random and said that we would buy them. Frederick did the same.

But suddenly I could not bear the thought of seeing them removed from this house. It made me feel as though we were being made robbers of a tomb. As Lorenz started dragging them together I said, "Perhaps after all it will be better not. Suppose she were to come back?"

And at that moment I said this honestly, in a last desperate effort to persuade myself that there was a chance that the Baroness and Philippson were still alive.

But this flimsy illusion was finally destroyed as Lorenz answered, in a tone of such fierce mockery as I had never thought him capable of:

"Don't worry, there's no danger of that—not any more."

Chapter XXV: ALL IS OVER

WITH THE TRAGIC AND OBSCURE PASSING OF THE BARoness all that was weird in the island returned. The awareness of supernatural forces inimical to us, which had been so strong in me before she came had been banished almost entirely by the element of concrete enmity and strife which she brought with her. The days that followed our visit to the Hacienda, where we found such indubitable proof that she and Philippson had been done away with, were the most haunted and uncanny I had known.

Added to this was the quite practical fear that Frederick and I might be implicated, should ever an investigation into these disappearances be made. We could only tell the story as we knew it, but who would believe us? And then there was another danger—Lorenz himself, the murderer. We said to each other that a man who could go to such lengths to regain his freedom would not be scrupulous about securing it at the expense of anybody who he felt might be a danger to him; therefore the slightest slip on our part, that might lead him to suspect that we had made all too accurate deductions, would inevitably expose us to the same fate as had overtaken the two others.

Our certainty about the murders sometimes seemed strange to me. Not the least doubt ever entered our minds but that the Baroness and Philippson had been removed by violence. We never found their bodies, and perhaps no one ever will. We did not believe that they had been thrown into the sea, for the sea is often not a very safe hiding-place. It is extremely probable that they were burned, for a furnace of acacia wood burns with such intensity that even bones consigned to it are consumed to fine ash. We ourselves had proved this with the cattle bones, which we often disposed of in this way. During such a drought even the hard acacia wood would burn like tinder.

There was another possibility, and this was the one which made the island beyond Friedo unholy ground to me from this time on. The ghost of Watkins had never disturbed us before. Now, passing the many caves and crevices one had to pass even on

so short a tour as to the orange grove, and remembering what hundreds of such caches the island contained, it was most sinister and horrible to feel that any one of these might harbor the murdered bodies of the Baroness and Philippson. If they are there, they surely will come to light one day, but undiscovered or discovered, the people of the islands and of the Ecuadorean coast number them already, and with certainty no less than mine, among the ghosts of Floreana.

Lorenz was in a fever to leave the island but it seemed as though all weather and all accident had conspired against him. Not weeks, but months, went by and not a ship touched Floreana. It was as though an unseen barrier had been cast around us which no ship could penetrate, and rendering—who knew?—the whole island invisible.

I have it in my diary that on the 21st of April the first rain fell. The terrible drought was broken, and a few days later Lorenz and Wittmer appeared at Friedo, bringing us mail and gifts from Commander McDonald, an airgun and some seeds. Evidently a ship had come but we had not seen it. My impulse was to ask Lorenz how he still came to be there and why he had not gone away, since the chance had come at last, but I refrained from putting this question to him. I need not have done so, however, for he anticipated it, asking if we had any use for a few more of the Baroness's things—his money was not yet sufficient to enable him to get away. I knew that this was not the reason, but said nothing, for I could discern but not explain the hidden lie.

Though I could hardly bear the thought of making any more purchases from the Hacienda, I thought it might be wiser not to refuse, and so I said I would think it over. Then suddenly I understood—no ship had called at all. Letters and gifts were among the many things of ours which the Baroness had intercepted, and for some reason or other Lorenz and Wittmer had decided that it would be more politic to restore these things to us. That this instinctive supposition was true was proved on opening the letters afterwards. They bore old dates.

It was not until the middle of July that a boat at last appeared upon the empty sea, and then it was a no more considerable craft

than Nuggerud's small sailing-boat. He had brought another journalist to Floreana, this time a Swede, and through this man the story of the Baroness's disappearance went out into the world. Needless to say, the version was the Lorenz-Wittmers'. Frederick and I commented little upon the story as the Swede repeated it to us. Perhaps we hinted what we thought, but we were careful, and besides we knew that no one would believe the tale we could tell.

Lorenz, the journalist and Nuggerud had lunch with us at Friedo before sailing. I could not help but be reminded of that other lunch, where Lorenz had been so noticeably absent. I thought of the long time we had known this young man, for time in a place and in circumstances like ours is measurable not by days but by experience. I sat comparing him with the Lorenz who had come to Floreana, debonair, healthy, youthful, with hope intact. And looking at him now, ravaged by ill health, bitterness and disappointment, I could not help but feel that of all the people who had come to the island, he was by far the most pitiable. How he had longed to go away! But now the time had come, and he was sunk in gloom and black depression.

Suddenly all the recoil which I had felt against him as a man with blood upon his hands subsided, leaving me filled with sympathy for this wrecked life, which might have been so different.

I tried to cheer him up and said, "Come, Lorenz, don't be sad. Be happy that you can go away at last. You've plenty of years before you to make good all that you've lost, and one day you'll look back on all this and think you only dreamed it."

But Lorenz answered somberly, and in a low tone so that the others should not hear, "I'm afraid—I don't know why—but I'm afraid of this trip, somehow."

"Why?" I asked, but Lorenz did not answer.

It was a brilliant day but all at once I seemed to sense a darkness in the air, as though a shadow which loomed up behind Lorenz had for a moment dimmed the sunshine. I knew that death was near for him.

During the next few weeks no other ship arrived. The atmosphere of Floreana had become so sinister that for the first time Frederick and I talked about whether we too should go away. The

peace of Friedo had been profoundly shattered by all the attacks from the outside which had so long besieged us. We did not know whether it had not been forever ruined.

It was a further irony that the woman who had been responsible for the destruction of our paradise kept us entrapped there after she was dead. For it was the thought of the murder that more than anything else made us decide to stay. It would have looked like guilt had we abandoned the island at that time. Looking back later upon this decision, I realized that it too had been dictated to us by the unseen authors of the tragedy of Floreana. We stayed.

The 20th of August was a day of one of the rare Pacific storms. The usually quiet surf rose up in furious breakers, rolling in from very far and making the whole coast quite inaccessible.

Like a bird of ill-omen the *Cobos* appeared. We watched her trying to put in at Black Beach in the storm. When this was found impossible, the skipper veered and made for Post Office Bay. Frederick went down to be there when the skipper landed.

We had been long without letters or news from anywhere. The *Cobos* brought mail for us and for the Wittmers, and a large number of letters and newspapers for the deserted Hacienda. The first words that greeted Frederick was the question we were soon to hear incessantly reiterated:

"What happened to the Baroness? Who was it murdered her and Philippson?"

The Lorenz-Wittmer version of the story seemed not to have received blind credence, and the Swedish journalist had drawn conclusions of his own—we knew how true.

Lorenz was missing. The journalist had had himself landed at Santa Cruz, from where Lorenz had engaged Nuggerud to take him in all haste to Chatham, in order that he might not miss the *Cobos*, which was due to sail soon for Guayaquil.

Nuggerud had shown the greatest reluctance to put out for the other island, lest they be becalmed, which was a dangerous thing on account of the fatal current which swept the archipelago. But every objection Lorenz answered by offering the fisherman a higher price until at last Nuggerud yielded. However, he made no secret of his grave misgivings to all his friends in the harbor of

Santa Cruz, from whom the skipper of the *Cobos* had the story. With the exception of a little negro boy, Nuggerud carried no crew. The sailing-boat was not seen or heard of again.

Summer came and went, with occasional visitors and the now-stereotyped catechism as to the Baroness's end. We found that many theories had been evolved, some assuming suicide, others accepting the hypothesis of murder, still others naïvely crediting the story of the mysterious yacht. The fact that months had passed without bringing a single clue as to the whereabouts of the Baroness and Philippson, alive or dead, did not disturb the faith of those who thought that they were still alive.

A strange mood had come over Frederick. He suddenly withdrew into the seclusion of his philosophic work, and labored at it unceasingly from early morning to late at night. A fury of productivity seemed to possess him, rendering him oblivious to every outside thing. The garden and the animals, the daily duties of the house and the plantation were left entirely to me, while Frederick wrote and pondered as though in desperate haste, lest something come to hinder the achievement of his work. His philosophic work was finished, and now he had begun to make an English translation of it in order, he said, that it might not be misinterpreted to the world.

Another change had come as well. We had found perfect harmony and peace together. All differences had been smoothed out, and we had reached that infinite understanding of each other which no words can tell. Frederick had become considerate and tender. All storms had ceased. And amid the débris of its outward peacefulness the inner life of Friedo's founders had achieved perfection. A stillness and a happiness that we had never known before united us in that last month in more than human oneness.

The tamarinds and aguacates which we had planted came into bloom for the first time. But it was not the herald of rebirth for Friedo. It was like the last spring of a world that would never know another summer.

On November the 6th, a handsome American radio broadcaster, Phillips Lord, visited us at Friedo, having made the whole long voyage in the schooner *Seth Parker*. Frederick talked with him for

a long time about his philosophy. When he said that I had been the only woman who had ever understood his work, I felt that he had set the seal of achievement upon my life with him.

In Phillips Lord's party there was a man who all at once reached across the table, took my hand and began to read my palm. I did not take this very seriously, though by the expressions of his companions I could see they did. When he had done he turned to Frederick and said, "Let me see yours, Dr. Ritter."

Frederick laughingly complied, saying to me, "Now you'll hear how long you're going to have me on your hands." Then, with a smile towards the palmist, he said, "Tell her the truth."

The stranger took Frederick's hand and glanced at it; suddenly the whole proceeding seemed to become earnest, and I scanned his face to catch its first expression. It did not escape me, and I knew that in the second's pause between the reading and the announcement something had been told me without words.

It was, however, with an air of cloudless candor that the American looked into Frederick's eyes and answered, "Oh sure I'll tell her the truth—she'll have you for another fifty years."

Frederick laughed too and said, "By that time we'll be about ready to go together—but we'd do that in any case, wouldn't we, Dore?"

I smiled back at him. Was he to die before me or was our flowering Friedo soon to be our common grave? The question did not weigh upon me. It did not seem to be important.

When these new friends had gone, we sat up for a long time talking about the strange and dark events which had occurred upon the island before our time, and almost uninterruptedly since we had come.

"We do not know what causes underlie the fate of men like Watkins," Frederick said. "Nor can we really put ourselves so far into the minds of people who are alien to us—the Baroness, for instance—as to be able to interpret their destiny. But if misfortune and even tragedy should come to us two here, I shall know what it was we were punished for."

I waited in silence for him to go on.

"The proper tasks of life lie within the frame of the community,"

he said. "Therefore the individual who fails to see this, or seeing it tries to escape and seeks his tasks elsewhere, will inherit the consequence of all wrong-doing."

I could not think that we had greatly sinned in coming to Friedo, and I knew that Frederick would not find his way back to a world which had never understood him, and to which he had always felt himself bound by superficial ties. I thought back over our life on Floreana, and felt that if chastisement were to come, we would not feel that we had bought our years there at too high a price, no matter what it was.

The long drought had ruined our season's crops, and the absence of ships had made it impossible for us to replenish any stores. We were once more in a serious predicament concerning food, for we would on no account seek help from the Wittmers.

One day, with great reluctance, we decided that we must overcome our aversion and have one of our fowls for dinner. That there was a certain degree of danger in this we very well knew, for our chickens had been decimated lately by a curious sickness which we could only attribute to my having given them preserved pork to eat, all other food having long since run out.

Since we had no more eggs, we had to supplement the vital materials contained in these by whatever means we could, for previous experience would have taught us, even without Frederick's medical knowledge, that sickness follows upon the absence of certain elements in diet. Frederick and I took every possible precaution in preparing the poultry, and when he thought that all the latent poison in it had been neutralized we put it in a dish and took it to the table. We ate one spoonful of it each for the sake of the necessary nourishment it should contain and made the rest of the meal of our vegetarian fare.

Before our usual bed-time, Frederick lay down, complaining of feeling rather ill. He had a headache. Instantly alarmed, I asked him if he thought that it could be the meat. But I had eaten some as well, and felt no ill-effects.

"It may be something else," said Frederick, "but don't worry. I shall be all right."

I took a chair and sat down by his side, watching him anxiously.

There was nothing frightening in his appearance; he was neither flushed nor pale. But after a while he said in a queer voice, "My tongue feels heavy."

I gave him charcoal mixed with calcium carbonate, and quickly made strong coffee as an antidote. Nausea set in and agonizing pains. The whole of that awful night was spent in trying to relieve the attacks, and stem the tide of poison which was overwhelming Frederick's tortured body.

At last an icy sweat broke out—it was the sweat of death. He knew that he was lost and I could only look on, ignorant and helpless. He asked me to read *Zarathustra* to him, indicating the page, and when I came to one of his favorite passages, he said in a faint voice and with a wonderful expression in his eyes, "Mark these lines, Dore, and remember them always . . . in memory of me."

In the pauses between the attacks, despair surged over me. Frederick was dying—what should I do at Friedo alone?

I went over to the table and took another mouthful of the meat, meaning to eat it all and die with Frederick. But suddenly I checked myself with horror. What if he did not die but remained ill and helpless, or even paralyzed for life? If I were dead, then I should have failed him in his hour of greatest need. I could not bear the thought, and prayed that if I had now poisoned myself, God might not punish me by killing me while Frederick still needed my help.

Frederick awoke out of a kind of coma. I told him I would go to the Wittmers' and get help. He tried to answer me, but could not speak. I brought him paper and pencil, so that he could write down what he wished to say. He made me understand that I should not attempt to go up to the caves alone. With my lame leg he feared that I would never manage it. But I felt that I must go, for I was afraid that not to ask the Wittmers' help might be to deprive Frederick of his last faint chance of life.

Even now I cannot bear to talk or think about that journey. The panic haste that I was in had numbed me, so that my lame leg all but refused to move. Every few yards I had to stop, and then I seemed to hear Frederick's voice calling out to me, in the failing

consciousness of the last moment, not able to understand why I had left him all alone.

It took me three hours to get to the Wittmers'. I shouted to them long before I reached the gate, and my call brought Wittmer's son. Wittmer himself was out. He had gone down to the Bay. But Harry took me back to Friedo on their donkey, while Frau Wittmer, leaving the baby alone, hurried down to the Bay to fetch her husband. When I got back Frederick was tossing feverishly and catching his breath in long and painful gasps.

"Where's Wittmer?" he wrote, and I told him, fearing that he might not live the hour that it must take before the man could come.

When the Wittmers arrived, the power of speech had left him entirely, though he could understand all that was said and was still able to write. He took the pencil and scribbled, "This is choking me . . . give me my gun."

In the little cupboard beside the bed his revolver had lain, always ready to his hand since violence had come to Floreana. While Wittmer sat dismayed and terrified, trying to soothe him with encouraging words, I slipped round and removed the gun, though this was not necessary, for paralysis had set in on that side and Frederick could no longer move.

At the thwarting of his wish, his face became distorted with maniacal rage, terrible to behold. I saw that the Wittmers could do nothing, and that the sickness must take its deadly course.

By evening he was quiet, and I went out into my garden and lay down upon the ground, leaving the Wittmers to watch beside the bed. There, where we both had labored side by side planting our Eden in the wilderness, I prayed that Frederick might get well again. The Wittmers went outside when I came back, and I lay down for a moment on my bed, hardly daring to breathe for fear of disturbing Frederick, who seemed to lie quite peacefully, though I could not tell whether he was asleep or not, and dared not talk to him for dread of waking him.

Suddenly he began to twitch from head to foot, and drum with his feet against the foot of the bed. I leaped up, terrified. This surely was the end. I watched, appalled.

Frederick sat up. He stretched out both his arms toward me. All trace of pain and torment had vanished from his face, which was transfigured with a look so lucid, so triumphant, so calm, so tender, so illuminated with the knowledge that surpasses understanding, that I could only gaze and gaze upon him like one who sees a miracle. Then he fell back, before I was able to utter a sound.

The linen I had brought from home made Frederick's shroud. We buried him in the corner of the garden which he liked most, and which had cost him the hardest toil. Flowers from the Wittmers' garden decked the grave.

The *Cobos* was not due for several weeks. I longed for her return, for now I had but one wish—to leave the island. I did not know what I should do back in the world again. I had no plans. But go I must.

I began to pack the few possessions that I treasured, carefully gathering all Frederick's writings, which I hoped one day to give to the world according to his dearest wish. The Wittmers were kind, and would gladly have had me stay with them if I had cared to, but I preferred to be alone at Friedo. After the first despair and anguish caused by the sudden shock of Frederick's death, a great calm filled my soul. Although I missed his visible presence, I never had the feeling I was alone. He was beside me everywhere and at all times, in the night when I lay listening to the wild animals coming to the spring, and in the mornings when I rose to face the day alone.

But as the days wore on, unrest returned. One day when this mood was very strong upon me I caught sight of a fishing-boat. It seemed to be making for Post Office Bay. I knew the men could not see me if I waved, but it had suddenly come into my mind that I must send word home and to our friend, Captain Hancock, telling them what had happened.

The boat was far away. All at once the sensation of being trapped, that feeling which we both had had since the murder, swept over me again, and I turned, as I had always done, for help to Frederick.

"Oh, Frederick, let me get the message to them somehow!"

I think I even said the words aloud, for they were still in my ears when I heard my name called. It was Wittmer, on his way down to the beach. I knew now that my messages were safe and hastened into the house to write them out.

"Frederick is dead," I wrote to Captain Hancock. "Please help me."

Quite calm again, I picked up a piece of embroidery which Frederick had designed for me, and went on working at it till the sun went down. The next day Herr Wittmer called again and said, "I'm sorry but your telegrams didn't go. The fishing-boat went past without calling at the Bay."

But I was undismayed. I knew that Frederick would not fail me.

Hardly had Wittmer sat down when visitors entered Friedo's garden. The *Esperanza* had called at the island and found the telegrams, which they would immediately send out. They had come up to tell me so. I begged them to take me back with them, but they said that this was quite impossible for there was no accommodation, nor could they wait while I made even the shortest preparations.

When they had left, I felt disconsolate and weary, and cried myself to sleep that night. I had yet to learn that Frederick would never fail me.

After a black and almost sleepless night I got up sadly in the early morning. I went down to the clearing where, looking out across the sea, I now sent my morning greeting to Frederick. It was the 6th of December. The sun danced upon the smooth waters, the air was fresh and sweet. The sunlight, flashing on a mirror, drew my eyes toward the Beach. Some one was signaling to Friedo.

The *Velero* had come—the *Velero*! I could not believe my eyes. The telegram I sent could not yet have reached land, yet here was Captain Hancock come in answer to my call.

When I saw him coming up the path at Friedo, gratitude to him and Frederick overwhelmed me and I burst into a flood of tears.

Captain Hancock had, of course, received no word from me. But he had had a presentiment that all was not well with us, and so he had come, though it was close on Christmas time, when every American prefers to be at home.

Through the newspapers he had learned all about the Baroness's disappearance. I told him our interpretation of the story and when I had done he said, "I can give you some news."

The *Velero* had touched the island of Marchena, having put in there because Captain Hancock heard that Lorenz and Nuggerud were there—but dead.

The currents Nuggerud feared had swept them to their doom, and landed them on the most arid island of the archipelago, where neither water nor edible plants existed. For Lorenz, all the long struggle and the final crime had been for nothing; Nuggerud, the experienced seaman who had sold his wisdom for a piece of gold, had made a tragic bargain. They had perished of hunger and thirst. The fierce sun had dried their corpses out like mummies and they lay as they had fallen in the last exhaustion, their skeleton fingers clawing the white sand in agony.

Captain Hancock, at my request, sent up to the caves to tell the Wittmers I was leaving and ask them to come to Friedo. Soon they arrived, and I put Friedo in their charge as long as they might stay upon the island. They said that they would look after it for me well and truly.

We and the Wittmers never had been friends, but we had been something more than merely neighbors. I wished them well on Floreana. I took them to the gate of Friedo and watched them take the path back to the caves—the last guests. With them went Fleck. He turned his little head to look at me again and again until the ciruela thicket hid me from his sight.

I said good-by to Frederick's grave, but did not feel as if I were leaving him there, cold in the hostile Floreana earth. In some strange way that I cannot find words for, I did not feel that he was dead, but that he had just begun to live.

As the thought came to me like a great illumination, I knew that the task which I had found in him had likewise only just begun. The look with which he died had told me that our experiment had not failed.

Floreana was only one stage in my life's work which I can never doubt again. The gods of Floreana could have no power over Frederick, whom they slew; he must live on through me.

POSTSCRIPT

Captain G. Allan Hancock, whose friendship was to prove so great a boon to Dore Strauch in her sorest trial, has written an interesting commentary on the events on Floreana. The portion reproduced here, by courtesy of Captain Hancock, has to do mainly with Lorenz.

We first met him two years ago, half way up the mountain. A pitiful figure he made as he sat for a moment and rested by the side of the trail. His great sunken blue eyes seem to haunt me yet. Five feet in height and so wasted in frame by the ravages of the dreaded white plague that I doubt if he would have moved the scales to an even hundred pounds. His clothes were in rags, he was hatless; and burned by the sun to the shade of a native, his skin contrasted strangely with his light blond hair. Over his shoulders was a pack which in the tropics it would sorely have puzzled me to carry. Where was he going, where was he from, we asked him in Spanish, only to be met with a dumb uncomprehending stare. Why we tried our halting stammering German on him, I do not know, but at once he became the most voluble of persons. In a moment we had his name, his story, his tale of regrets and of disillusionment. His unhappiness seemed to leave him for a time. We stood for a new hope, for a chance to escape the drudgery of his everyday life, and the constant reminders of the days when he was well and strong and still the favorite of the Queen. Would we take him away, he wanted to leave so badly. How much would it cost to get back to Paris? Once there he would not have to work so hard, and soon he would be well again. His eyes glowed as he thought of scenes so far away, the pinkish spots on his cheeks became brighter, he coughed a little, slumped over and in a hopeless, listless tone said, "I think I am not as strong as I was." He rested a moment, his eyes dulled as his thoughts came back to the present. "Won't you come up the trail with me?" he said. "I know that the

Baroness will be glad to see you. Then too I want you to see our new gate which we have just completed. It is so bright and pretty with the paint which we received from Chatham on the last boat."

Toiling up the mountain, we seemed never to reach the top. Then, quite unexpectedly, we came into a clearing, and before us was Paradiso. A shout, an answer, and, his troubles forgotten, he rushed forward to meet his queen. Again he was the serf, happy in her service, content with a glance now and then. Devotedly her slave.

A strange figure she presented as, with flying hair, she hurried down the path to greet us. A green sweater, a very abbreviated pair of shorts, and well-worn tennis shoes comprised her apparel. Her hair was streaked with a broad band of white which had come in a night. Wayward and imperious, she was controlled by a temper which flashed into evidence upon the slightest provocation. She may have had dreams of being a feudal queen, with servants, retainers and slaves to carry out her slightest wish. Philippson, a strapping fellow of pleasant manners, was her intended husband, so she told us.

We must come into the house, she was very proud of it. If we would wait Lorenz would make us some wonderful cakes. But it was quite impossible for us to stay to dinner; it was getting late and the trail would not be easy for us should we be overtaken by darkness before we reached the beach again. They accompanied us down through the wild lemon trees, and at the edge of the clearing bade us goodbye. We started along only to be stopped by a shout. Philippson had gathered the Baroness up in his arms as one would a baby. She was laughing and waving to us, and as we looked they turned about and hurried along, he carrying her up the trail to Paradiso. Even the look of fury, yes, and of hatred which swept over the face of Lorenz as he watched them stride away, did not convey to us the feeling which came over him as he saw a more successful suitor carry away his idol. His eyes filled with tears. Then his expression changed, he too smiled, and waved goodbye to us. "Aufwiedersehen," he called.

A year passed. Rumors came at times of trouble on Floreana. Then late one night my telephone rang. It was the press. Did I

know Lorenz? Two men had been found dead beside an overturned boat on the black lava sands of Marchena Island. Some letters as yet unmailed were scattered about, and among them was a passport apparently belonging to one of them. In a day the mystery of their identity, the reason for their journey of death, became front page news all over the world.

In a week we were on our way south again. Eight days and nights, through storms and calms, our ship steered straight for Marchena Island, that strange, dead, truncated remnant of an ancient volcano which stands sixty miles northward of its nearest Galapagan neighbor. We landed where the black sands of the beach had been pushed high up onto the lava by the tremendous breakers constantly rolling in. Far above the reach of the waves we could see the wreck of a small home-made boat. Slowly, soberly we climbed the hard packed sand. We reached the top, paused, and there in front of us a gruesome sight presented itself. Two bodies, men both of them, lay sprawled in attitudes of the utmost despair. Lorenz, for there was no doubt that it was my friend from Paradiso, was on his face, one arm cramped beneath him, his hand clasped over his heart. The other arm was crooked above his head, as if in a last futile effort to ward off the broiling rays of the sun. He was dressed as I had last seen him. I would have known him anywhere. Blue denim trunks, the edges bound with a curious running stitch, a gray-brown sweater—hatless and barefoot as usual. His camera, the only possession he really owned, was at his side. His shrunken body, dried by the torrid sun, had taken on a darker color, but the skin drawn tight over the fleshless face had retained his features. Thirst, the curse of the Galapagos, had left the marks of the agony which had preceded death. Quietly we walked along the sands to the boat, and there we found the other, Nuggerud, a man who had called at the ship a year ago as we lay in Academy Bay.

For hours I sat upon the beach, and looked over the rolling waves with the eyes of those poor fellows who had sat there so many weeks before. The clouds, gathering on the mountain, obscured the sun as the chill of approaching night crept down upon me, or was it something else? Was it the loneliness of that desolate beach now

turned cold? Quickly I arose, we launched the boat through a surf which chilled us to the bone, as curling breakers half-filled our craft with water. Back to the ship, to light and warmth and safety, to dream of the ghastly forms which we had left there upon the sand.